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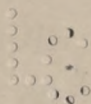
A HAPPY LITTLE FLOCK

FOUR-FOOTED FRIENDS

STORIES OF ANIMALS AND CHILDREN

BY

MRS. HUNTINGTON SMITH



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PREFACE

The great need in this world is kindness. Let any one think for a moment, and he or she will realize that a large part of suffering everywhere comes either through active unkindness or from selfish disregard of another's feelings. If children are carefully taught kindness and thoughtful consideration for every living creature, they are going to grow up to make the world better and happier. Lessing, the great German writer, said : " The man who has most pity is the best man — is the one most disposed to all social virtues, to nobleness of every sort. He who awakens our compassion makes us better and more virtuous."

The mother who teaches her child to feed the birds, to take good care of the family cat or dog, to pity the overdriven and overladen horse, is going to reap a harvest of comfort and pleasure in her child in after years. The mother who teaches her child selfishness and hardness of heart by neglecting to feed the dog or the cat, by turning homeless ones away from her door, by putting a whip or a gun into the hands of her boy, is sowing the seeds of cruelty which will bring sorrow and pain to her and to others as the child grows up.

The twenty-three stories in this volume have been written with the hope that they may impress on the minds of the young, and possibly of their elders, the beauty of kindness ; the happiness there is in a kind act, for kindness is reflective ; the capacity that all these lower animals, as we call them, possess for pleasure or

pain, and their value to us as friends and devoted companions. Children will often be impressed by a story and remember it when advice or a reprimand would be forgotten.

If we can teach the young the duty of thoughtful kindness, we are benefiting not only the family but the neighborhood, the city, the state, and the country. Kindness uplifts the world, and only through kindness shall we ever reach true civilization and Christianity.

ANNA HARRIS SMITH

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FOUR-FOOTED FRIENDS

FOUR-FOOTED FRIENDS

WHEN Mrs. Hammond told her neighbors that she was going to live on a farm with her Uncle Henry, they said that she would be lonesome away from all her friends. They said that her children, Winifred, Henry, Mary, and Dot, would miss their playmates, for there were no children near her uncle's farm.

Mrs. Hammond smiled and answered that there would be four-footed friends and feathered friends, and that the children would be quite happy with them.

Mrs. Hammond had a good watchdog named Hector. Hector went with them to the farm, and before he had been there a week, he had learned not to chase the hens or chickens. He even let Dixie, a pet pigeon, light on his back and ride around the yard.

Dixie was the first friend that Mrs. Hammond made. She found him on a low tree, caught by a piece of string, when she was walking with the children in the field. She cut the string and carried the pigeon home. He was nearly dead with hunger, so she fed him; then she made a little bed for him in a basket. In a few days he was



HECTOR AND DIXIE

quite well and flew in and out of the house. He would not go far away, but coaxed other pigeons to come and live there. In a short time there were four or five pretty pigeons to feed and care for.

One day a neighboring farmer gave Mrs. Hammond a present of four young geese. They grew very fast, and after a while they had a flock of geese, which Winifred, Mrs. Hammond's oldest daughter, took care of and called hers.

Every few weeks droves of sheep went by the farm. Mrs. Hammond always pitied them because they looked so hot and thirsty. She talked with Uncle Henry about them, and he put a watering trough by the roadside so that the sheep could stop and drink and so rest a little. She put a bright new dipper where the drover could see it and get a cool drink for himself.

One day, after a flock of sheep and lambs had passed by, Mary, Dot, and Hector were out in the road, when Mary saw something white on the side of the road near the watering trough. She found that it was a lamb, but it lay so still that she thought it must be dead.

Dot ran to the house to call her uncle, who hurried out to see what was the matter. The lamb was alive, though not able to stand up. Uncle Henry carried it in his arms to the shed and fed it with warm milk. Then he made a bed of soft hay for it.

Mary, Dot, and their mother sat by it until it seemed much better; then they fed it again. They took such good care of it that in a few days the lamb was well again. It followed Dot everywhere, so they all called it "Dot's lamb."

The children were afraid that when the drover went by again he would want to take the lamb away, but he said: "You have saved its life. It was sick, and I did not notice that it was left by the roadside. You deserve

to keep it."

Mrs. Hammond then replied that they would be very glad to keep any lambs that were sick or tired, so once in a while the drover picked out one of the weakest of his flock and left it at the



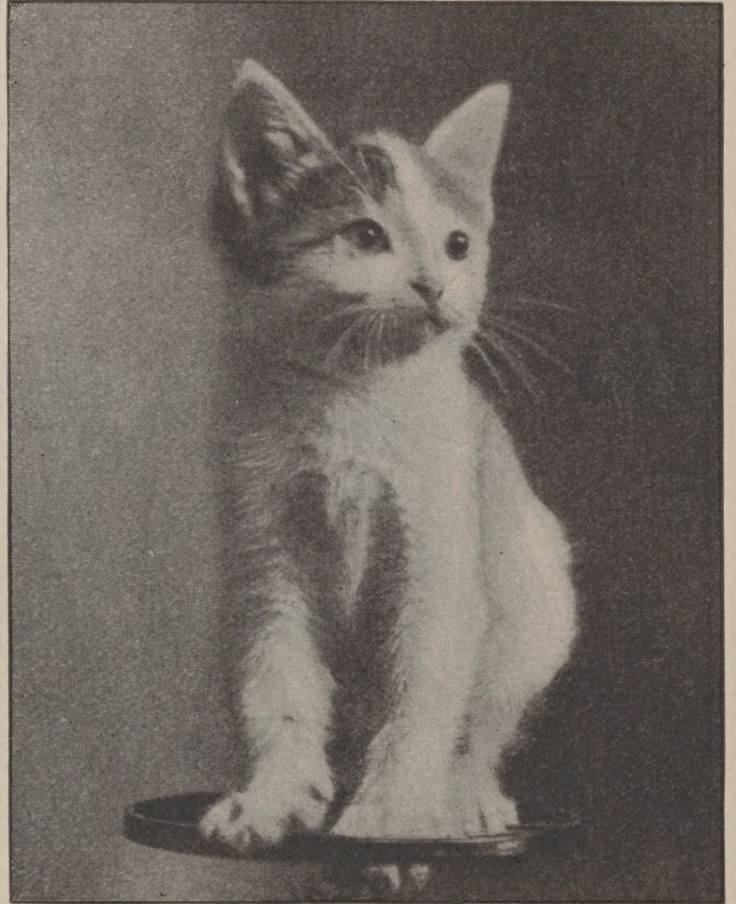
DOT AND HER LAMB

farm, until Mrs. Hammond had a flock of her own. The good care she gave them made them grow strong and healthy.

Before long, people heard of the kind lady and her children who welcomed any tired, hungry creature and gave it help; so a number of birds and animals were

brought to them. A boy who drove a grocer's wagon brought a little robin that had fallen out of its nest. Another boy brought a wounded crow, and a man brought a baby squirrel that he had found in the woods. These helpless creatures all got well and strong in a few weeks, and as soon as they were able to take good care of themselves, they were given their liberty. Mrs. Hammond did not think it kind to keep birds or animals in confinement.

A woman who came to work on the farm brought them a beautiful kitten, and they were all delighted with



THE BEAUTIFUL KITTEN

such a lively little playmate and took good care of it.

Uncle Henry went every week to the market where there were live animals sold, such as horses, cows, sheep, and pigs. One market day he got home late. It was quite dark when they heard him driving into the yard. He stopped at the barn to feed his good horse and make him comfortable, and then he came in, smiling.

"You never can guess what I have brought home for you to-day," he said to the children, as he sat down to the supper table.

"Oh, please tell us, Uncle Henry," Mary cried; "I can't wait until morning. Is it another lamb, or a rabbit?"



JENNY AND NEDDY

"I shan't tell you to-night," he said, "I had rather surprise you in the morning, but you may try to guess if you like."

Winifred guessed that it was a pony,

because she wanted one so much. Then the children guessed that it was a dog, a kitty, a hen, a bird, a little pig, but Uncle Henry shook his head to all of these guesses, and said that they must wait until morning to find out.

Before breakfast the children ran out to the barn. Uncle Henry was all ready for them, and when they saw what was standing just outside the shed, they screamed with delight. It was a donkey with a dear little baby

donkey. They were standing quietly together, looking at the children with soft, inquiring eyes.

"Oh, how dear they are! May I touch them?" asked Mary. She asked this because her mother had taught her to be careful about putting her hands on strange animals.

"Animals are timid with strangers," Mrs. Hammond had said. "If a dog thinks he is going to be struck or hurt, he may use his teeth, and then he is called cross. A cat may scratch when startled by a sudden pat. Some horses will bite if touched suddenly. So it is best to be careful and very gentle with all animals."

Mary waited until her uncle told her that the little donkeys were quite gentle and that if she went up to them quietly they would not be afraid of her. She put her arms around the baby donkey's neck, and he rested his head on her shoulder as if he liked being petted.

The mother thrust her soft nose into Mary's hand, and Uncle Henry said that she was looking for sugar.

"Are they named?" Mary asked.

"Yes; the mother is Jenny and the baby is Neddy. They were brought to the market to be sold, by a woman who was going away and could not take them with her. She was fond of them and afraid that some one would get them who would not treat them well. Then I told her about you and how you all loved your four-footed friends. She begged me to take them—so here they are."

"I will be very good to them and love them dearly," said Henry and Mary.

Mrs. Hammond heard them, and she laid her hand on Mary's shoulder and on the baby donkey's head. "That is right," she said. "It is love they need. If there were



WINIFRED FEEDING THE GEESE

more love in the world for our four-footed friends, it would be better for them and for the people who own them."

"We have a lot of friends now," said Mary, "and I love every one of them. I think it is beautiful to live on a farm."

"So do I," said Winifred and Henry.

"There is no place like the country for children," said Uncle Henry, "and I thought you would not be lonesome here. You will never find more faithful friends than your four-footed ones; yet they are often neglected and forgotten by some people."

OUR DOG TRAMP

COMING home from school one day I found Tramp. I should n't have noticed him if I had n't come very near running him down with my bicycle.

"Well, this is strange!" I said. "A big dog like you ought to be able to get out of the way. You have actually made me get off my bicycle."

Then I looked more carefully at him and saw that he was dusty and lame. He was so thin and weak from hunger that he could not move quickly.

"Come on, old fellow," I said, "I'll take you with me. Mother would never forgive me if I left you starving on the road. Come on." I patted him on the head, and he looked up at me in a pitiful way. It almost seemed as if he had tears in his eyes.

I mounted my bicycle and whistled to him to follow.

It was plain that there was not much life left in him. I had to get off my bicycle many times to help him. If it had not been for water in the brook and some sandwiches left in my school bag, I think I should never have got him home. After the lunch we started for home.

As I was going up our driveway, father came riding home from the mills on black Sally.



OUR DOG TRAMP

He stopped long enough to say, "Where did this dog come from? Another stray one, I suppose."

I took Tramp to the stable and made him a bed in the corner of the carriage house. There I carried him some soup and bread. He could not eat much, but he looked up into my face and licked my hands, as if he wanted to thank me.

I rubbed oil on his lame leg and left him. He did not stir from that bed for three days. We all grew very fond of him. Father had a large dog house built for him, and I put a flagpole on it.

Mother never felt afraid to be left alone after Tramp came, and she let him go in and out of the house as much as he liked.

I was on my way home from school one day when I saw a dog that looked just like Tramp following a ragged, dirty-looking boy about my size.

I had a whistle that Tramp knew, so I whistled and he turned and came toward me. Sure enough, it was Tramp.

Then the boy whistled and called "Jack." Tramp went back toward him. Then he stopped and looked at me.

I went up to the boy and said, "What are you doing with my dog?"

"He is n't your dog; he's mine. He is my Jack," he answered. As he spoke he went up to Tramp and put his hand on the dog's head.

"He is n't yours. He's my dog Tramp. I'll leave it to all the boys to decide," I said.

The boy looked as if he did n't know what to do. By this time I was close to him, and I saw how unhappy he looked. He seemed to be making up his mind what to do. At last he spoke, "If the dog knows me and follows me, you can tell whether he is mine or not."

He called "Jack" and started off. The dog followed until I whistled and called "Tramp." Then he stood still and looked first one way and then the other. At last he sat down in the street and whined.

"Look here!" I called to the boy. "Come back and talk it over. Did he run away from you before I found him, or did some one steal him? He must have been yours once. He does n't take to strangers."

"No, Jack never liked strangers," the boy said.

"Well, what are you going to do about it?" I asked, with my hand on Tramp's head. "I have had him more than a year, and we are all very fond of him. Father has built him a dog house, and I don't know what we should do without him now."

The boy looked at me and said: "You have a father and mother, a home and friends, but I have only Jack. We always were just like brothers. We kept together until they took me away from him. Many nights I have cried for him, for I thought he would die without me. I never expected to see him again, and I am so glad."

He patted Tramp and laid his cheek down on the dog's big head. "He looks fine," he said. "I've never seen him fat like this. I didn't know him at first; but he knew me. He has remembered me more than a year."

I saw tears drop on the dog's head, and the boy drew his coat sleeve across his face.

"That's a handsome collar! I always wanted to get him one, but I couldn't get him anything but a strip of old leather tied with a string. Did you say he had a house—a real dog house?"

"Yes," I answered, "and I guess he will miss it some if you take him away. Have you a good home for him?"

The boy's face grew so red that I wished I had not asked him. He answered very low, "I haven't even a home for myself."

"Then why do you want to take him away from me when he is so happy? If you care for him, I shouldn't think you would want him to go half starved. And you have no home for him," I urged. You see I wanted to keep Tramp for myself.

"All right," he said, trying hard to keep from crying. "You keep him. I didn't think he would be alive now. I won't take him from such a good home. I'll go along. You hold on to his collar, and if I don't call or whistle, he will understand. He is a bright dog, Jack is."

He started, but turned back again to say good-by to the dog. He could not speak, because he was crying.

I felt so sorry for him that I said, "Come home with me and see the dog house, and my mother. Perhaps father or mother can get some place around here for you. Then we can take turns having Tramp."

The boy looked at me to see if I meant it.

"I guess your mother won't like it if you take me home with you."

"Like it! You don't know my mother. She won't like it if I don't bring you home, when she hears about you and — Jack."

I said "Jack" to please him. He looked at his hands and clothes and said, "I washed my face and hands in a brook this morning, but I am afraid I'm not very clean."

"Come on," I said, "you can wash again at my house."

So we started home, Tramp running before us as happy as if he understood it all, and I think he did.

On the way the boy told me that his name was Henry Marvin. He had been getting odd jobs to do for two months, and had slept in barns or under trees. All this time he had been looking for Jack. But he did not tell me that he had had nothing to eat all day.

Mother and father were on the porch and saw us coming, and mother asked Henry to sit down. Father and I went to the barn together.

After a while mother called father, and he had a talk with the boy, while mother got a bowl of bread and milk for him.

As soon as he had eaten it, father took him to the stable, and mother said to me: "I am glad you brought that poor boy home, Robert. He is in need of friends. Your father is going to give him work in the mill, and I will give him some of your clothes."

After he had been with us about a year, a fellow who used to know Henry came to the mill to work. He called Henry "a good-for-nothing tramp."

When I told mother, she said that Henry lost his father and mother when he was very young. He had no home and no one to care for him, so after a while he was sent to a school for boys. When they sent him to this school, he begged to take his dog with him, but they only laughed at him. He worried about Jack all the time he was in the school, and when he left, he began hunting for him. He says he never was so happy in his life as when he found Jack.

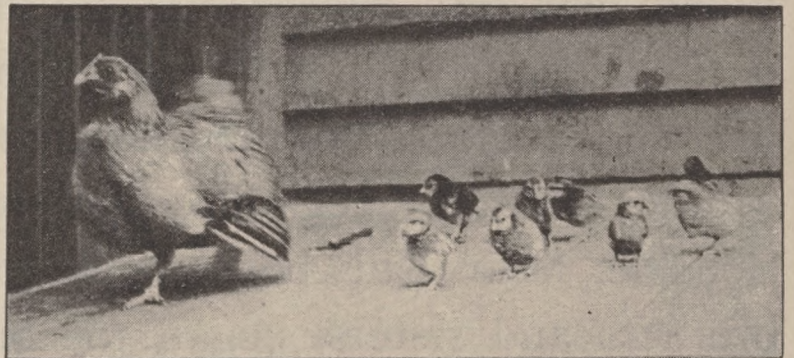
Henry has been with us for three years, and we are all very fond of him. He is like a brother to me.

Our Tramp is getting fat and lazy, but he is as good and as happy as ever. He likes to stay in the house with mother, or to go about with either Henry or me. He seems to love us both alike, and I don't know which of us loves him the best, we are both so fond of him.

QUEER FRIENDS

OLD Mother Speckle was the proudest hen you ever saw, for she had twelve chickens. Every egg hatched out. She had been very much afraid that one would fail, so when she saw one, two, three, and so on up to a dozen, she was filled with joy. She made such a clucking about it that it drove the other hens wild.

Mother Speckle was confined in a little house which was built on purpose for her and her children. It had a nice latticed door



OLD MOTHER SPECKLE

through which she could get plenty of air and sun, and watch her chickens, and call them back if they ventured too far away from her.

At first the chickens were little yellow fluffy balls, but as they grew larger, Mother Speckle discovered that one of them was speckled all over with black spots. The others were white, or had only a few gray feathers here and there among the white.

As soon as she noticed this, she began to be cross to little Speckle, and all the chickens followed her example and treated him unkindly.

One evening when the sun was going down, Mother Speckle called her chickens together as usual. They came hurrying into the little house and began to crowd under their mother's warm wings.

Now it is n't easy for a hen to cover twelve growing chickens with her wings, and that night Mother Speckle and her children had a particularly bad time.

The little chicks peeped and picked at each other. Some flew on her back, then tumbled off again, and peeped louder than ever. Some put their little heads up into her face, and between her wings and her back until Mother Speckle began to be cross. Just then little Speckle, who had been crowded out by his selfish brothers and sisters, began to complain.

"Peep, peep," he cried, "I want to get under, too. I'm cold."

Then old Mother Speckle lost patience and showed what an unkind mother she was. She gave two or three pecks at little Speckle and screamed out: "Go away, you ugly little thing! Go to the black hen. I don't believe you belong to me at all." And all the little chickens peeped out, "Go away! Go away!"

Poor little Speckle! What could he do? He stole out into the long grass, hoping that it would hide him

from prowling cats and dogs. He missed the warm covering of his mother's feathers, and he was cold, lonesome, and unhappy.

He peeped a few times, but he soon stopped, for he thought he heard something coming. His little heart beat fast, and he hoped the creature, whatever it was, would not hear him.

It came nearer and nearer, and stopped just where Speckle was hiding in the grass. Speckle looked up, and saw, to his great terror, a kitten sitting down looking at him. When he noticed what a small kitten it was, he ventured to look into its face and peep again.

"What are you doing out here in the grass?" asked the kitten. "I think a small chicken like you ought to be under its mother's wing."

"My mother has driven me away because I am so ugly," replied Speckle, trembling with cold and fright.

"Oh, dear!" said the kitten, "that is very bad. But I know how to pity you, for I have been taken away from my mother and three little brothers and sisters. It was only yesterday that they brought me here, but it seems a week ago. Last night they shut me up in the barn, but I ran out to-night after I had my supper, and I don't know how to get in again."

Little Speckle didn't know what to say, only that it was too bad, and he hoped that the kitten was n't very cold.

"Why, no," the kitten said, "I am not so cold as I am lonesome; but if you are cold, I will lie down here with you in the grass. I think you will find my fur as warm as your mother's feathers."

So saying, the little kitten stretched herself out in the grass, and the chicken cuddled close to her, with his head in her fur. Very soon both the kitten and Speckle were fast asleep.

When morning came they were awakened by the sun shining on them. The kitten jumped up so quickly that she almost trod on the chicken, but Speckle hopped out of the way. Then they both stood still and looked at each other.

"I am hungry, and I think it must be near milking time," said the kitten. "You come to the barn with me, and I will give you some of my breakfast."

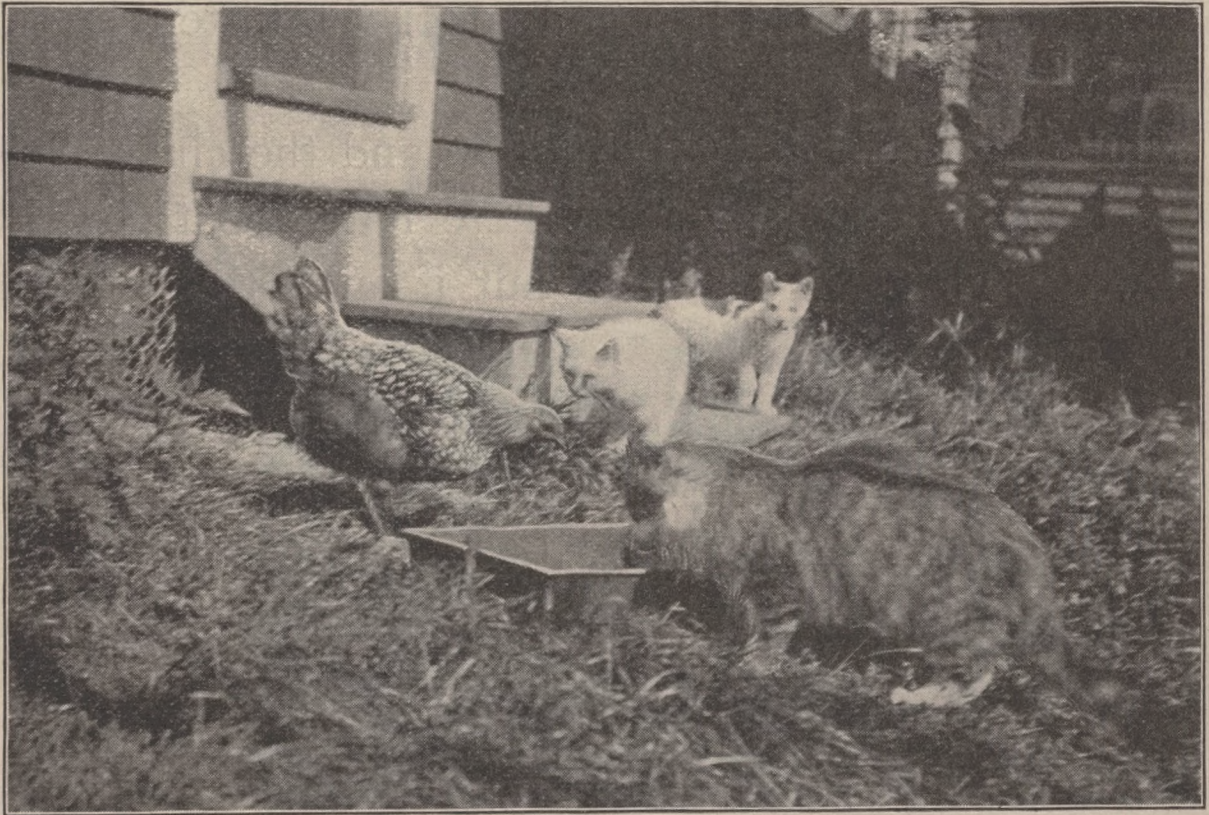
The forlorn little chick was only too glad to have such a kind friend, and he ran after the kitten as fast as he could go.

The barn doors were wide open, and the farmer's boy was milking the cow. He saw the kitten come in, and said to her kindly, "Now you wait till I get through milking and I'll give you some breakfast." He did not see the little chicken behind the kitten.

When he had finished milking he took a tin pan from a shelf and poured it full of milk; then he called, "Kitty, Kitty."

To his astonishment not only the kitten came to the pan, but a small speckled chicken began to drink with the kitten.

"Well, well!" was all that he said; but he ran into the house as fast as he could go, leaving his pail full of milk on the barn floor.



QUEER FRIENDS

In a few minutes the whole family were there to see them. The kitten and little Speckle didn't seem to notice them, but went on drinking their milk together.

"It is one of old Speckle's chickens, I am sure," said the farmer. "How did it get in here with that kitten?"

"Shall I carry it back to the old hen, father?" said the boy.

"No, I think we will let it stay with the kitten, for I noticed old Speckle picking at it yesterday. This little chick looks just like his mother, and she seems to be cross about it. Give them a good breakfast, boy. Put some bread in Kitty's milk, and little Speckle can peck at that. I should say that this chick had made up his mind to leave the old hen and adopt the kitten for his mother."

And so it seemed, for the kitten and the chicken became constant companions. Where Kitty went, Speckle followed. They ate together, but if any other chicken came near their pan of milk, the kitten drove it away. They slept together in the barn, and they even played together.

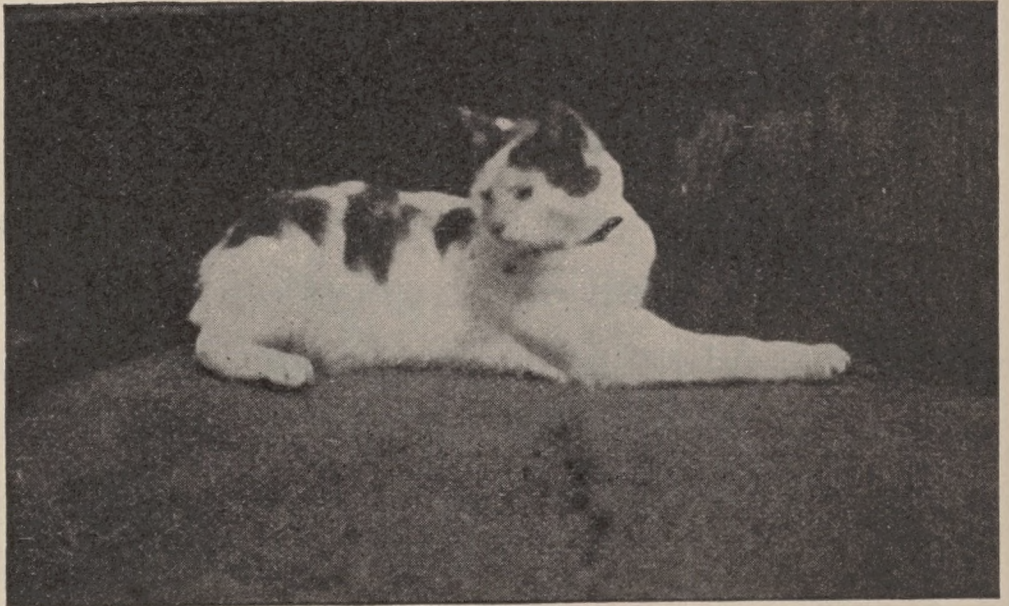
The chicken would pick at the kitten's long tail, and the kitten would catch him softly in her paws and let him go again.

So the two lonesome little ones found comfort in each other, while the farmer's family enjoyed watching this queer friendship.

BEAUTY'S STORY

FIRST, I had better tell you how I look, for I believe I am called a very handsome cat. I am large, and my fur is a beautiful yellow and white. My eyes, they say, are sometimes yellow like my fur, and sometimes almost green. I have a beautiful tail which I wave proudly, and my paws are white, clean, and dainty.

I am a very quiet cat and do not care to go roving about, but I like an easy-chair by the fire. Sometimes when it is



BEAUTY, THE HANDSOME CAT

not very cold I curl up in the barn doorway or in some sunny corner. In summer I have a cool shady place under a bush in the garden.

Often when I lie dozing in the sun, dreaming that I have caught a fat mouse, my little mistress comes along

crying out, "Oh, here is my dear little Beauty!" She seizes me in her arms and dances about with me until I am almost dizzy. I never try to get away from her, for I am too fond of her to struggle; but I don't like to have my naps disturbed, and I never like to be squeezed.

That is one of my trials, and another is my food. I ought to be fed regularly, but my little mistress forgets me. Sometimes the cook is in a hurry and I have to tease. I hate to do it, but I have to make her remember that I have n't been fed. She is n't always particular to give me a clean dish, and she has been thoughtless enough to give me sour milk, which I never drink, and corned beef, which I do not like.

As I told you, I am a quiet cat and do not care to rove about, but one day I went through our fence into a field for a lunch of fat grasshoppers.

I crawled through a gap in the fence and sat down in the middle of the field. I think I must have dozed, for I did n't notice a boy coming across the field. The first thing I knew, he snatched me up in his arms and ran, before I could open my mouth to mew.

I tried to kick and scratch, but he had smothered me in his jacket, and he held me so tight that I could do nothing to get away. He ran so fast that I was hoping he would fall, but he did n't. He kept on running until I heard him open a door and shut it. Then I knew that he had taken me into a house.

He took me out from under his jacket and dropped me on the floor. I flew into a corner under a table. I expected to be killed, and shook so with fright that I could hardly stand.

"What did you bring that cat home for?" I heard a woman's voice say. "Where did you get her?"

"Oh, I picked her up, and I'm going to take her to our store. Mr. Wilkins promised me a dollar if I would get him a good cat."

"But that cat belongs to some family, I know; it's too sleek for a stray cat. You have no right to it."

"Don't you worry, mother; there are cats enough around, and I want a good one. I picked it up, and I shall take it to Mr. Wilkins to-morrow morning."

The woman did n't say anything more. I was hoping that she would make the boy carry me back, but she went about her work, and I stayed trembling under the table.

It was late in the afternoon when I was taken, and soon evening came. I heard dogs barking in the yard, which frightened me still more, for I was afraid that they would get into the house and chase me.

When night came, the woman opened the cellar door, and I ran down as soon as I saw it opened. She put some milk and some meat down there, but I could n't eat, for I was sick with terror and homesickness.

I was still crouching in a corner of the cellar in the morning when they came after me. The cruel boy saw

me and carried me upstairs. There I saw a large basket which I knew was to carry me away.

The boy was just going to put me into the basket, when another boy opened the outside door and in rushed a great dog. I made one spring. The cellar door was still open, and I went down with a bound. I flew around in terror, and rushed up a wall, leaping into a coal bin.

Imagine me, with my snowy white paws, in a black, dirty coal bin! I heard the boy and his mother on the stairs, and the woman was saying, "The cat's in a fit; you will have to go without her this morning or you will be late."

Was n't I thankful for my hiding place, even if it was in a coal bin! I stayed there, shaking and trembling a long time, wondering what my future would be, when the door opened again, and I heard the woman's voice saying, "She is down here somewhere, in the coal bin, I think; she has had a fit, and I don't know as she is over it."

Then I heard another voice which made my heart glad, saying, "Poor Beauty, she must have been dreadfully frightened, to have a fit!" Then the head of my little mistress appeared over the side of the bin, and her sweet voice called me. I jumped out of my hiding place and ran to the edge of the bin, and my dear little mistress took me, dirty as I was, into her arms and kissed me.

"You'd better take this apron," the woman said, "you will get your dress all coal dust. I am glad you have

found her. My boy did n't know that she belonged to anybody."

I was still trembling, so my little mistress carried me home as fast as she could, all wrapped up in the woman's apron. When we got into the house, she took me right into the sitting room and put me in an easy-chair. She covered me up with her own shawl, and I stayed there several hours before I felt able to sit up or eat anything.

I must tell you how my little mistress found out where I was. She missed me at night and kept looking for me all the evening. Her mother could hardly coax her to go to bed, and her father went all over the garden and into the barn looking for me. The whole family were very much alarmed.

In the morning my little mistress could n't eat her breakfast, she felt so badly, and she went over to the next neighbor to ask about me.

This neighbor said she saw a boy running out of the field, and he looked as if he had something under his jacket.

Then my little mistress thought she knew where the boy lived, so she went to his house and asked for me. Was n't it fortunate that I had n't been carried away to that store!

I am a very happy and thankful cat now, but I never go into the field. I never used to hurry, but now I always run when I see a strange boy.

HAROLD'S DREAM

HAROLD was playing by himself in the garden, under the maple tree, one hot afternoon. He was tired of his wagon and his little train of cars, so he went to where Prince, the dog, lay asleep on the grass.

"Come here, Prince; I want to put my hat on your



HAROLD AND PRINCE

head and play that you are a little boy," he said, pulling Prince up by his front paws.

The dog was sleepy and tired

and did not want to play, so Harold took a little stick and struck at him, until poor Prince got up and ran away.

Then Harold looked for Snowball, the cat. She was snugly curled up under a bush, asleep; but Harold pulled her out roughly, and tried to crowd her into his little wagon.

Of course Snowball did not like that, so she scratched Harold, and ran off as fast as she could go.

Harold's mamma, who had been watching him from the porch, said: "I have told you very often that it is unkind and selfish to disturb Prince and Snowball when they are asleep. Now you must go to your room."

Harold ran upstairs and threw himself upon his own little bed. It seemed as if he had been there only a minute when something strange happened. He thought that he was not there at all, but in the garden, and a number of dogs and cats were near him talking. He was surprised to find that he understood what they were saying.



SNOWBALL

Prince was the first speaker. "I am very tired of this," he said. "My little master does not treat me well at all. This morning he took me with him when he went out on his bicycle, and I had to run so fast that I got very hot and tired. When we came back, and I was trying to rest, he disturbed me so that I had to go and hide."

"I often have to hide from him," said Snowball. "He will not let me get a chance to sleep. He lifts me by one paw, and he squeezes me so tightly that it makes me ache.

He cannot understand how it hurts, or he would not do it, I am sure. Sometimes I have to scratch him to get away."

"You are a brave cat if you dare to scratch him," said a thin, sober little kitten. "There are three children at my house, and they are always running after me. I have hardly a minute's peace. Sometimes I think they will



THE DOG THAT WAS CHAINED

kill me. The baby pulls my fur out, and squeezes me until I cannot breathe, and the other children pull me around until I am bruised and sore. Their mother never

tries to stop them, but if I give them one tiny scratch with my claws, to let them know when I am hurt, they slap me and call me cross."

"That is very unfair," said a dog who was walking about. "You must excuse me for walking while I talk, but I have been fastened all day with a short chain, and I am quite stiff. You don't know how thankful I am to get a chance to run."

"I am often fastened all day," said another dog, "but that is not the worst of it, for sometimes they forget to give me fresh water. My house is in a hot part of the yard, and the heat makes me suffer with thirst. If I could have plenty of water, a good bone, and my house in a shady place, I would not mind being tied so much."

"You might not always get a bone or water if you were not tied," said a hungry-looking dog. "I am free to run, so I suppose my master thinks I can provide for myself. I hate to steal, and often I cannot find water to drink when I am suffering from thirst. I think my master ought to look out for me a little better."

"Speaking of fresh water," piped a little bird sitting on a branch over the dog's head, "the worst thing I ever knew happened to my cousin, the canary. His mistress went away for a visit and forgot to leave him water enough to drink, and he died of thirst. Only think of it! I have to fly a long way for water sometimes, but I am free. I cannot bear to think of my poor cousin."

"I wonder," said a cat under the tree, "how the people who own us would like to be treated as they treat us. Half the time they forget to give me food or drink, and when I tease for it, they scold me and say that I am 'always under foot.' They do not know that I can't help crying when I am hungry. If they fed me, I would not get in their way."

"They say," remarked another cat, "that we can catch our own food, but that is not so easy. Even when hunger drives us to try to catch a bird, the birds are usually too spry. As for mice, there are days when we cannot even



THE LITTLE GIRL AND HER KITTEN

get a smell of one. And the hungrier any one is, the harder it seems to find anything to eat. Nowadays the will pails are all tightly covered, so there is no chance there."

"You can't tell me anything about

that," said a faint voice. All turned to see where it came from, and Harold spied under a bush the thinnest, most forlorn cat that he had ever seen. It made his heart ache to look at it.

The cat looked timidly around, and edged as far away from the dogs as she could, then she said in a weak voice:

"When I was a kitten, I was taken away from my mother and given to a little girl. She was very kind to me, and I had milk and meat every day. I was happy, for I was never turned out at night, and she did not pull me about. I wish I had died then.

"I was nearly grown up when the family moved away and left me. I cried about the house day after day until I was nearly starved. I went to the next neighbors, but they drove me away. I tried another neighbor, and a great dog flew after me. Wherever I went I was driven off by a dog or stones. No one wanted me, no one pitied me or was willing to feed me. I now wander about trying to find food and shelter. I am slowly starving, for often I can find nothing to eat for days. I had three dear little kittens under the doorstep of an old house, but I had no food to give them, and they died."

Here her voice died out in a wail. All the other cats wailed, too, and even the dogs growled low in sympathy. One of them said to another: "I am glad that my little master never let me chase cats. I can see now how cruel it is, even if you do not mean to hurt them."

Harold began to sob, and then he heard his mother say, "Why, my dear boy, what are you dreaming about?" He awoke to find her bending over him.

"O mother, I have had such a bad dream! Please let me go right over to Clara Moore's house. They went away last week, and I am afraid that they left her little kitten."

Harold's mother was glad to grant the request, and she went with him to the next street.

The poor kitten was there on the back doorstep, crouched down and very unhappy. When she saw them coming, she got up and cried, as she tried to tell them how hungry and miserable she felt.

"We must not leave her here to suffer any longer," said Mrs. Sumner; "we will carry her home until we can find a good place for her to live."



DESERTED KITTEN

"The dream made me see things so clearly," said Harold, "that I shall try never to be thoughtless of any living creature again."

"I would rather have my boy kind and considerate to animals than to have him great in any other way," said his mother.

"Just remember," she said, "that the horse, cow, cat, dog, and everything that lives, can be hungry, thirsty, hot, cold, frightened, and lonely. It is your duty to help them, just as you would like to be helped if you were in their place."

THE LOST TWINS

A DREADFUL misfortune had come to Milly Rand, or "Little Sunshine," as her parents called her. Her face was usually bright with sunny smiles, but now the sun was clouded in, and tears had chased all the sunshine out of her face.

Patty and Gray were lost. Patty and Gray were two kittens so much alike that no one but Milly could tell them apart.

When Milly got home from school every day, her first question was, "Where

are Patty and Gray? I want them to play with me."

Now they were gone, and Milly had searched the house from cellar to attic, but no Patty or Gray was to be found. She questioned every member of the family, but no one had seen them.



MILLY'S TWINS, PATTY AND GRAY

Milly was in despair. Not even her mother could comfort her, and when dinner time came, and papa got home, Milly still wept.

In vain her mother urged her to come to the table and try to eat some dinner. "How can I eat," she said, sobbing, "when some cruel boy may have stolen Patty and Gray, and will starve them?"

After dinner Mr. Rand took her in his lap and rocked her, and told her that perhaps they would come back again in a day or two. At last, Milly, worn out with crying, fell asleep. Her father laid her gently down on the couch and covered her up.

"What shall I do when she wakes?" Mrs. Rand said. "I am afraid she will make herself ill over this loss."

Poor Milly did not sleep long, and when she awoke, her grief was as great as before. Everybody in the house tried to take her mind from her loss. Her elder sister brought a lovely string of beads, and offered them to her, but Milly waved them away.

A great noise was heard on the stairs,—thump, thump, thump,—and the door opened. In came her little brother Bobby, dragging a new sled that his papa had given him only a week ago.

Bobby had had only one coast on it, but the warm-hearted little fellow was bringing it to console his sister. But Milly refused this magnificent gift.

Last of all came Bridget. She went up to Milly and said: "Now just come into the kitchen and see what I am going to make. I'm mixing up some nice gingerbread, the kind you like, and you may cut out anything you like — boys and girls, and little dogs and cats."

At the last word, "cats," Milly cried out as if some one had hurt her, "Oh, my little Patty! oh, my poor Gray! where are you?" And there was another shower of tears. Poor Bridget went in haste to the kitchen, and Mrs. Rand took Milly in her arms.

"My dear little girl," she said, "I know you did n't mean it, but I am afraid you have hurt poor Bridget's feelings. Did you know that she was going this afternoon to see a sister who has just come from her home across the ocean? She has n't seen this sister since they were girls together. She gave up going because she thought she might amuse you this afternoon by making gingerbread. Don't you think that she will be sorry now that she stayed at home for you?"

Milly stopped crying to listen. "Can't she go now, mamma?"

"No, dear. It is too late. I have let Ann go, and I can't spare them both, you know."

"But, mamma, how can I play when perhaps my kittens are suffering?"

"Milly, dear, will it make their suffering any less for you to cry all the afternoon?"

"No, mamma, but I can't be happy. I don't feel as if I could ever smile again."

"I would like to have you learn to smile sometimes for the sake of other people. We all feel badly about Patty and Gray, but we have felt worse about you. You have made us all very unhappy, my child."

"I am very sorry, mamma, and I will try not to cry any more for my twins. I think I will go now and stay with Bridget."

"That is my own brave little girl," Mrs. Rand said; then she took Milly's hand, and they went to the kitchen together.

Bridget brightened up when she saw Milly. "I thought the gingerbread would bring her," she said to herself. She began to prepare for the baking. She went to the pantry and got flour and sugar and eggs. Then she went to the closet to get a bowl to beat the eggs in. When she opened the closet door she stopped suddenly.

"Hark, Miss Milly! What is that I hear?"

Milly ran to her side and listened. Surely it was a faint *mew*, and following it was another much louder. Milly opened a drawer under the shelves where Bridget kept the dish towels. Out jumped Gray, while Patty crawled out more slowly from the back part of the drawer, yawning as if she were saying, "What! is it morning so soon?"

Milly seized them both, and laughed and cried over them, until the astonished kittens struggled out of her arms and ran away.

"Well, well!" exclaimed Bridget. "I left that drawer open only a minute while I was getting dinner. They got in and hid, and I shut it in a hurry and never saw even the tips of their tails."

"The next time that they are missing," said Milly, "I shall look in all the closets and drawers in the house before I call them lost."

WILLIE'S PRIZE

"MOTHER, there comes Willie with a dirty little cur slinking along behind him. That boy has a perfect mania for picking up stray dogs and cats. I do hope Delia won't let it into the kitchen."



WILLIE'S PRIZE

Isabel Boynton stopped, and her mother, looking up from the book that she was reading, said: "What are you worrying about now, Isabel? What harm does a stray dog or cat do you, that you should begrudge it a meal and a shelter? Delia found a good home for the

last dog that Willie brought home, and that was surely better than leaving it on the street to starve."

"But, mother, they are so dirty that I can't bear to see them around."

Just then a boy about eight years old burst into the room. His eyes were shining, his cheeks all aglow, and he began to speak eagerly.

"Oh, mother, I have found such a poor, wretched little dog on the street! Some boys were throwing stones at him and I made them stop. He is lame and he trembles all over. He is starved, I am sure, and Delia says that I must ask you if she may feed him. May she?"

"We don't want stray dogs in the house," Isabel exclaimed, as soon as she could get a chance to speak, "and you are a naughty boy to bring him in. Very likely he has fleas or some disease, and our Flossie will catch something if he stays here. Mother, tell Willie to take him away, won't you?"

Mrs. Boynton looked at her two children. Willie was generous and warm-hearted, so different from Isabel, who was cold and selfish. Mrs. Boynton hoped that there was tenderness in Isabel's heart if it could only be reached. She was a problem to her mother, who could not understand such a disposition.

Mrs. Boynton was so kind-hearted that she liked to have her children sympathize with suffering. Isabel's selfishness was beginning to trouble her, and she wished,

if possible, to make her daughter see for herself this fault. She stooped down and took up a little white poodle from the rug. It was Flossie, a great pet with all

the household.

"Isabel," she said, "suppose Flossie should get lost, and a large dog should bite her and make her lame, and then roll her in the mud. If you should go by afterwards and see her on the street, do you think you would recognize your dainty white pet?"

"I dare say I should not, mother, but it is very unpleasant even to imagine such a thing."

"Still, you know it might easily happen.

This very dog that

you want Delia to close the door upon may have been somebody's pet once. Even supposing that he never had a comfortable home or kind care, do you think he cannot suffer?"



FLOSSIE

Isabel's cheeks grew red, and there were tears in her eyes. She looked sorry and ashamed.

Willie seized his mother's hand and said: "Oh, come, mother, come! The little dog will be starved if we wait any longer."

"I want you to come, too," Mrs. Boynton said to Isabel, and they all went together to the kitchen.

Such a piteous little dog as it was, huddled by the stove, shaking with weakness and fear. Such a sad little creature — muddy, lame, and hollow-eyed. The sight of it was enough to melt the heart of any one who stopped to think. Isabel looked at the forlorn little dog and said, "Oh, let us take care of him, mother!"

Delia was only too glad to get permission to feed him. When the dish of meat was set before him, and he ate ravenously, she said: "He was just starving for food. When my work is done I will give him a nice bath, and that will make him feel better."

It was wonderful what one week's good care did for the little dog. For the first two or three days he slept nearly all of the time on a little bed that they made for him in the shed. Then his thin sides began to fill out, the sad look disappeared from his eyes, his lameness went away, and they saw that he was really a very pretty little fox terrier.

"He is of good breed," Mr. Boynton said, "and he ought to be intelligent."

It was not until they had had him nearly two weeks that he began to show how clever he was. He and Flossie were great friends, and one morning they were lying on the rug before the fire while the family were at breakfast. Willie called Flossie and made her stand up and beg for a piece of bread. The newcomer looked at Flossie, then got up, shook himself, stood up on his hind legs, and walked up to Willie's chair.

The next day Mrs. Boynton asked Isabel to "shut the door," but before she could get there the little dog had shut it by throwing himself against it. Every day Carlo, as they called him, did some new thing. He would carry a basket in his mouth a long distance. He would lie down and pretend that he was dead, and one day when Isabel was playing the piano he got up and took a few steps in dancing.

Mr. Boynton advertised him as soon as he found that he was a valuable dog, but as no answer came, they began to think of him as their own.

He was devoted to Willie, and when Willie was out of school the two were inseparable. Carlo always went to the schoolroom door with Willie, and met him when he returned.

They had owned him six months when he found his old master. Willie was coming home from school one day and Carlo was with him, when suddenly Carlo gave a sharp bark and made a dash at a gentleman. He

jumped up on him with little barks and whines of joy, and the gentleman was as glad as the dog, for he took Carlo up in his arms.

The man looked at Willie and asked, "Where did you get my little dog? I was afraid that I should never see him again."

Willie told the story as well as he could, with Carlo jumping first on his old master and then on his new master. When he had finished, he looked sorrowfully up into the gentleman's face and said, "I suppose you will want to take him away now, and oh, how we shall miss him!"

"No, I think I will leave him with you, for my wife and I travel about a great deal. He belonged to my little girl who died. I would like to go with you and see his new home. How came you to call him Carlo?"

"Oh, we tried every name that we could think of, and he would n't notice any until we tried Carlo, and then he acted as if he knew that name."

"My little girl named him Charlie, and the names sound somewhat alike."

Mr. Carter was very much pleased with Carlo's new home and was glad to find him so well and happy.

"I have never allowed any dog or cat to be turned from my doors," he said, "but I know that many people are thoughtless about animals, and so I felt very anxious about our pet."

Mr. Carter never claimed Carlo. He and his wife went to Europe the next day and were gone a long time. When they returned they said that it would be cruel to take Carlo from a home where he was so happy. So they made Willie a present of him.

Isabel grew as fond of Carlo as of Flossie. The two dogs became great friends, and no cat or dog was ever turned away again by Isabel.

FREDDIE'S BIRTHDAY

LITTLE Freddie Gordon got up one morning feeling as if something unusual was going to happen. He had to stop and think a minute before he could remember what it was. Then it came to him that this was his birthday. The sun was shining, and the birds were singing gayly in the trees near the house. His sister Mollie was out in the garden picking some roses. Freddie felt sure they were for him. He wondered what other presents he would have. He was five years old, and he was going to have a party at five o'clock that afternoon.



FREDDIE AND NERO

Freddie could hardly wait to get dressed, he was in such a hurry for the day to begin. He was almost impatient with his good nurse. It seemed as if she never would get his hair combed and his new suit out of the closet. When the last string was tied, and the last button buttoned, he ran down to breakfast as fast as his feet would take him.

The first thing that he saw as he entered the dining room was a pretty vase beside his plate containing five lovely roses. On the other side of the plate, all in a row, were five bright silver dollars.

Freddie's eyes shone until they were as bright as the silver pieces. He looked at his father and mother and gave a happy little laugh.

"I know who gave me these," he said; "papa gave me the money, and mamma gave me the flowers."

Mollie, Freddie's eight-year-old sister, gave her little brother a hug, five kisses, and a ball that she had crocheted for him out of bright-colored worsteds.

After breakfast the postman brought a letter from one of Freddie's cousins in the country. She wrote:

Dear Cousin Freddie,

I wish I did not live so far away, for I should like to be at your birthday party. We all have something to give you, but we are going to keep your presents until you come to see us. I have a little white kitten for you. She is so little that she can't open her eyes yet, and I have named her Daisy. Johnnie has a pair of white rabbits with pink eyes, and Kate is going to give you five yellow chickens that have just come out of their shells. You don't know how cunning and pretty they are. We all send love, and hope that you will come and visit us just as soon as the violets peep out of the ground.

Your loving cousin

Nellie

Freddie was so delighted with this letter that he got his mother to read it to him three times. His sister read it to him twice after that, and he didn't get tired of hearing it.

Freddie went to school every day, and his sister Mollie took charge of him on the way. Mollie was usually very careful of him, but this day she was excited over Freddie's party, and when a little friend across the street called her, she told Freddie to wait for her a minute.

This friend wanted Mollie to look at something in a store window that she was going to buy for a present for Freddie.

Freddie waited a few minutes, and then thought he might as well walk along. He knew it was almost time to turn into the street where the school was. He turned a corner, but it was not the right one.

He walked on and on, a long way, and turned more corners, but he saw nothing familiar. The streets grew narrower, and the houses looked small and strange. Children were playing out on the sidewalks, and Freddie noticed that their hair was not nicely combed, and some of them had dirty faces. They stared at him, and some began to shout after him and call him queer names.

Freddie was a brave little boy, but he was frightened at being so far from home, and he began to cry. Somebody took hold of his hand, and a child's voice said pleasantly, "What are you crying about, little boy? Are you lost?"

Freddie rubbed the tears out of his eyes and looked up. He saw a little girl, not quite as large as his sister Mollie. She had sweet blue eyes and a gentle voice, but

she was dressed in a thin calico dress, and was so lame that she walked with a crutch.

Other children crowded around Freddie, and looked at his nice clothes, and touched his pretty hair.

"Where do you live?" the little girl asked.

Fortunately Freddie knew both the street and the number of his house. Among the children gathered about, the little girl discovered a newsboy whom she knew.

"Oh, there is Billy Foster. He knows all the streets, and he is a real good boy. He will take care of you. Billy, can't you take this little boy home?" she cried out to the boy.

Billy's clothes were old and patched, but he looked clean, and he had a bright, honest face.

He came forward, followed by a little dog, and answered: "Oh, yes, Kitty, I know where it is, and I'll take him home. My papers are all sold."

But Freddie was so pleased with his new friend Kitty that he refused to give her up. So, the newsboy on one side, and lame Kitty on the other, they all set out, the little dog at their heels.

Freddie entertained them on the way with an account of the birthday presents he had had and the party he was going to have that very afternoon.

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon were sitting at the front window looking anxiously up and down the street in the hope of seeing their little boy. Mollie was lying on the sofa, for

she had cried until she was quite ill. Messengers had been sent in every direction to look for him.

When Billy, Kitty, and Freddie walked into the house through the back door, no one saw them. The first thing that Mr. Gordon knew, a little dog came running up to him and jumped up on him, as if he wanted to tell him something.

Then a queer thumping sound was heard—it was Kitty's crutch; then a dear voice chatting to his little visitors. "Come right along. I want to show you my birthday presents, and my mamma, papa, and Mollie. Come in; you must come with me!"

Mrs. Gordon sprang into the hall and in one moment had the dear little runaway in her arms. Mr. Gordon took Kitty and Billy to a sofa and heard the story of how they found Freddie.

The two children were bashful at first, and almost afraid to speak, but kindness soon put them more at their ease. When they were taken to the dining room and treated to sandwiches, cakes, ice cream, and bonbons, they thought it was like a visit to fairyland.

Soon after, they were ready to go, and each had a basket of goodies and a shining piece of silver. Billy turned at the door, and calling his little dog, he begged Freddie to take him as a birthday present from him.

"I want to give you something, we have had such a good time, and Nero will be happier with you, because

my mother does n't like dogs." So the first party went away, minus one member, and there was time for Freddie to have a nap before the second party came.

There were games, supper, music, and dancing at the second party, and many pretty gifts were brought to Freddie.

When all was over and mamma was putting Freddie's tired little head on the pillow, he said: "I had two parties, did n't I, mamma? They were both lovely parties, but it seems as if I liked the first one the best. I shall always love Billy's dog and try to make him happy, because Billy and Kitty were so good to me, and brought me home to my dear mamma."

Then he fell asleep, and the birthday was over.

DOWN THE RIVER

ONE lovely day two children stood in a meadow, looking at a boat on the river, fastened by a rope to a stake. One was a boy, about ten years of age, and the other, a girl, two years younger than the boy.

"Papa said that the boat must be put under the barn for winter, some time to-day," said the girl. "I do wish we could have had one more row in it, don't you, Harold?"

"Yes, I do. I hate to give up going out on the river. Why can't we go out a little

while now, Alice? I'll go up to the barn and get the oars."

"We can't. I asked papa if we might go out this afternoon, and he said that one of the oars got broken in the barn."

"Well, we can get in and rock, anyway. Come along, Alice."



THE RUNAWAY BOAT

Harold pulled the boat in to the shore, and the two children got in, and began to rock it from side to side. Suddenly there was a cry from Alice, "See, Harold, the stake is going to give way!"

As she spoke, the boat swung out into the current.

"O Harold!" cried Alice, "what shall we do?"

Harold noticed that Alice was beginning to cry, and he saw that he must be brave for her sake.

"Don't cry, Alice," he said; "the river will be narrower soon, and we shall drift up against some shore."

"But it's growing late. It will be dark soon, and I feel afraid," said Alice. "Can't we make them hear us at any of the farmhouses up on the shore?"

"I am afraid not, Alice," answered Harold; "they are too far away. We must sit still and try not to worry. If no one is in the fields or on the river, there is the narrow place, you know; we can surely get the boat in there."

The boat drifted rapidly down the stream. The dew began to fall, and it was growing dark and cold.

Just as Alice began to sob softly, and Harold was almost in tears, the river grew so narrow that they found themselves quite near the shore. A few minutes more, and they were within reach of tall reeds, by means of which they drew the boat in toward the shore.

Harold jumped out of the boat. He stepped almost up to his knees in water, and pulled the boat up as far as he

could. Then he helped Alice out, but he could not save her from getting her feet wet.

"Oh, where are we, Harold?" cried Alice. "I am so frightened and cold. Can't we find a house somewhere?"

"We will try," said Harold, bravely. "Don't cry now; it won't do any good. See, here is a road, and there is a light!"

By this time the children were on the road, and right before them stood a very small, black cottage. Alice was going to run to it, but Harold held her back.

"I remember that cottage, Alice. We passed it on our way to the school picnic. I heard some boys say that a cross old woman lived there all alone. They said that she hated boys, and chased them with sticks sometimes."

"O dear! what shall we do? We can't go there. Isn't there another house near? I am so cold, and I don't like this lonely road."

"There is n't another house for half a mile. We must go in here, for your feet are wet. Surely she won't hurt us. Maybe she likes girls, and I can go home if she will only take you in."

"Oh, no, Harold, you must n't leave me alone there," cried Alice.

"No, I won't. Come, let's be brave and go in," and Harold, holding his sister's hand, went up to the cottage.

The first knock brought no one, but a louder one was given, and then steps were heard.

"Who is there?" said a voice that sounded very stern to the frightened children.

Harold answered: "We are Harold and Alice Melton, and we lost our way on the river. We are wet and cold, and want to know the nearest way home."

The door was opened just a crack, and in that small opening appeared a face which the children thought was very ugly.

The old woman held a lamp so that its light shone upon the two anxious children. She threw the door wide open, and said, "Come in." As she spoke she smiled, and the children were no longer afraid of her.

She led them into a warm room where a teakettle was singing on the stove. There was a rag carpet on the floor, and an old-fashioned sofa covered with cretonne had a pattern of such gay flowers that it was like having a small flower garden in the room. There were plants in the windows all in blossom, and the children smelled pinks and heliotrope as soon as they entered the room. A large cat got up from his chair beside the stove, and came to meet them.

Alice stooped down and caught the cat up in her arms. "Oh, you darling! oh, you beauty!" she cried. "Harold, isn't this the most beautiful cat you ever saw?"

"Why, you dear child," the old woman said, "you love pussies, don't you? Girls do, I guess, but boys —" and

she looked at Harold. Before he had a chance to speak, Alice answered for him.

"Oh, Harold likes all kinds of pets just as much as I do, and he is very fond of cats and kittens."

"I am sure he is a good boy then. That is why my Jonathan did n't run when he came in. But tell me how you got lost, children?"

Harold told her all the story, and said that he ought to go home to let his parents know what had happened to them. He was afraid that Alice could n't walk back, for they had drifted in the boat a long distance. He was sorry to make her so much trouble.

"Trouble! why I am just as pleased as I can be. I was thinking this afternoon how pleasant it would be to have some one come in to supper. I felt lonesome."

"It must be lonesome for you," said Harold, kindly, "living so far from everybody."

"Well, I have company three or four times a year, and the butcher comes once a week, and the groceryman, and milkman. They all stop and chat, when they can spare the time. Now take off your wet shoes and stockings, and then we will have supper."

"I ought to go home right away," said Harold, "they will be so worried about us."

"You must get your feet dry first," said the old woman. "Now I am going to set the table, and we will have tea together. I made a loaf of gingerbread to-day. It is a

treat, for I don't make it very often. I made some apple sauce too, and I hope you like johnnycake," she said, looking at them.

Both children said that they were very fond of it, which seemed to please her very much.

"I will toast it," she said, "and pour a little hot milk over it. Jonathan likes it best that way."

The fire burned brightly, the tea-kettle sang cheerily, and a delicate odor came from the toasted johnnycake. Soon all was ready. Mrs. Baxter



JONATHAN, MRS. BAXTER'S COMPANION

put Jonathan in an old-fashioned chair next her own.

"He always sits beside me at the table," she said. "Some people would think it was queer, but he is the only companion I have. I think he knows when I am lonesome, for he purrs louder, and it sounds as if he were trying to say, 'Cheer up. See how happy I am!'"

"I should think you would be lonesome here, so far from everybody," said Alice. "Wouldn't you like it better in the village?"

"Yes, it would be more cheerful if I could stay there. I used to live there, but I was driven away."

"Driven away!" exclaimed Harold and Alice.

"Yes, driven away," the old woman repeated. "The boys did it. They stole my apples and grapes. I wanted the apples, because I like apple sauce in winter, and the grapes, because I could n't afford to buy any. I went out and tried to stop them, but they called me names and threw stones at me and at Jonathan. Once they hit Jonathan and I was afraid they had killed him."

"Oh, how cruel they were!" cried Alice, with tears in her eyes.

"It was cruel, but I hope they did n't mean to be so bad," said the old woman.

"Well, they drove me out. I dreaded to see them going to and from school. I wanted to run when I heard their voices. So here I am, away from everybody. It is lonesome, but it is quiet, and I don't feel afraid."

"Oh, what a shame," cried Alice again, "to be driven out of your home!"

"Well, let's not think about it any more. Tell me if you like my gingerbread."

"It is splendid!" both children answered, "and so is the johnnycake."

The children were so hungry that it seemed to them the best supper they had ever eaten. Harold had just begun to say that he must hurry home, when a knock was heard at the door.

Mrs. Baxter opened it, and an anxious voice inquired if two children had been seen in the neighborhood.

"Here they are, sir," said Mrs. Baxter. "Here we are, papa," cried Harold and Alice.

Mr. Melton came in, and as he kissed the children he said, "Did the boat run away with you, Harold?"

"Yes, papa; how did you know?"

"I went down to the river, and stake, rope, and boat were gone."

"I hope you were not worried, papa," said Alice.

"Your mother and I felt anxious, for I could n't tell where you would be able to land." Then, turning to Mrs. Baxter, he added, "I hope my young people have n't given you too much trouble."

"No trouble at all, sir," Mrs. Baxter said. "I was pleased to have them here to tea with me. I wish I could keep them overnight."

"You are very kind, indeed," Mr. Melton said, "but a neighbor will be here soon with a carriage. He was to drive down the road and stop at every house, while I came down the river. I think I hear his carriage now."

Mrs. Baxter hastened to get the shoes and stockings, which were now dry, and soon the children were ready.

On the way home Alice told her papa how the old woman came to be living alone in the woods. Mr. Melton was grieved to hear of such cruel boys, and resolved to teach them lessons of true manliness. This he did, so that in the springtime old Mrs. Baxter came back to her cottage in the village.

Even Jonathan ran no longer at the sound of a boy's voice. When he once strayed outside the gate into a field, a boy who used to be Mrs. Baxter's greatest terror brought him back in his arms. She rewarded him with a piece of her nice gingerbread and a bunch of sweet old-fashioned pinks.

THE GROCER'S BOY

IT was the week before Christmas. Everybody was ordering all sorts of good things and asking to have them "just as quick as possible." The grocer's boy, John,



THE GROCER'S BOY

was at the store early, and soon many baskets were filled with orders to be delivered "in a hurry."

The horse, old and overworked, was hurried out of the stable before he had quite finished his breakfast, and John began to pile the baskets into the wagon.

"Be lively now," the grocer said; "get back as quick as you can."

John jumped on the wagon, seized the whip, and gave the horse a sharp cut to begin the day with. The horse started off at a smart trot, his body quivering with the cut. He was always ready and willing to start without the insult of a blow.

John kept the whip in his hand, and if the horse held up his pace a minute to breathe, another snap of the whip kept him on the run.

John felt very proud of himself as he flourished the whip. He looked on both sides of the street to see if any of the boys were where they could see him.

He did not look at the horse's heaving sides or notice the sweat starting. He did not see the strained look in the horse's eyes as he was urged and whipped along the road.

At the different houses where he left the groceries, John rushed in and out as quickly as possible. In several places he was given fresh orders, something that had been forgotten and must be brought in haste.

So the morning passed and dinner time arrived. As John put the horse up in the stable he could not help seeing that his breath came hard and fast, and he was wet with sweat.

"I guess it won't do to give him any water, he's so hot," John said, as he put a scanty allowance of dry feed into the manger.

The worn-out horse was almost choking with thirst. His throat was hot and dry, and the dry feed did not go down well. He was cooling off too rapidly in the cold stable, for John had not taken time to rub him down, and had thrown only a thin covering over his wet skin.

John hurried in to his dinner and asked for something warm to drink, for he said he was tired and chilled. His mother gave him a cup of hot cocoa, then he ate a good dinner rapidly, and started off for the afternoon's work.

"Hurry up," said the grocer, as soon as John appeared. "Get out the horse and take these baskets, they're all rush orders."

"I went to Mrs. Bell's twice this morning," said John. "I wish she would give all her order at one time and not keep us running there all day."

"I can't help it. She's a good customer. Hurry up," answered the grocer.

John ran out to the barn. He had meant to give the horse water before he started out again, but being hurried, he forgot it. In a few minutes, whip in hand, he was urging the tired, thirsty horse over the road again.

The afternoon was much like the forenoon, only the horse, growing more and more tired, began to stumble on the slippery road. John jerked him up with angry shouts and a cut of the whip.

Once the poor animal tried to turn down a street where there was a watering trough, for he was almost crazy with thirst, but for this act John gave him another blow.

A little farther on, John stopped. Without throwing any blanket over the heated horse, he let him stand, while he got out and bought a cup of hot coffee.

Toward the close of the afternoon the horse began to hang his head, and when John touched him up with the whip he did not go any faster.

When he stopped for the third time at Mrs. Bell's house, the horse's legs were trembling and he closed his eyes as if he were going to sleep.

Mrs. Bell looked out of the window and said to her Aunt Sarah, "I think it's a shame for Mr. Rush to let that boy race his horse so all day. Every time he has been here to-day the horse was in a sweat, and now he looks as if he would drop. It's wicked to work a horse so!"

Her aunt replied, "Yes, he's been here three times to-day, has n't he? It is a pity you forgot to give all your order this morning."

It was seven o'clock before John put the horse in the stable. He remembered then that he had not given him water all day. He did not want to go out to the barn again, so he gave him a pail of ice-cold water, which the horse drank greedily. Then he put his supper before him and left him.

He did not stop to rub down the aching legs or give the tired horse any attention he could possibly help, but he threw a blanket over him and closed the barn for the night.

As he passed the store door to go home, the grocer called out, "Have you put up the horse all right?" and the boy answered, "Yes."

When John came to the store the next morning, a very angry-looking grocer met him at the door. "You can go home as quick as you like. I won't have a boy work for me that drives my horse to death."

"Is the horse dead?" asked John, turning pale.

"It is n't your fault if he does n't die," said the grocer. "I've been up about all night with him, and I must get another horse to take his place till he's well."

"You told me I must hurry every time I went out," answered John.

"Well, you ought to know when a horse is used up and not keep him running all day. I did n't want you to do that. Now I have lost Mrs. Bell, one of my best customers. She telephoned me that she would n't trade with me if I let boys drive my horse to death."

The horse died that day, and the grocer, the boy driver, and Mrs. Bell were each to blame.

The grocer ought not to have trusted a boy who had no sympathy for animals to drive and care for his horse.

John was too selfish to give the horse time to breathe or eat, and he did not care whether he was made comfortable in the stable or not.

Mrs. Bell was thoughtless in giving her order, and made the horse take many unnecessary trips to her house.

So a willing, patient animal was neglected and worked to death, when with good care he might have lived many years and done faithful work, because the man, the boy, and the woman had never learned to be thoughtful and kind.

THE STOLEN NEST

ONE bright morning in May, Mr. and Mrs. Song Sparrow flew into the woods in search of the right place to build a nest. Mr. Sparrow said, "What do you think of this thick, green grass under the trees?"

Mrs. Sparrow cocked her pretty head on one side and looked at it from a low bough of a tree.

"I am a little afraid to build there," she said. "Once I had a beautiful nest in the grass, and a boy ran through the field and stepped on it. I had no eggs in it, but I think I will put it in a safer place this time, for it is a great deal of work to build a nest."

Mr. Sparrow sang a sweet song, and then picked a few insects off the leaves near him. He was thinking, and soon he said: "That is a very nice bush that you are sitting on. We could hide a nest there under the leaves and it would be safe. No one could tread on it there."

Mrs. Sparrow hopped around in the bush and looked it over carefully. She flew in and out of it, chirping like a busy little housewife. At last she said: "Very well, we will take this bush for our home. I will go now and look for something to build it with. It is not such easy

work as one might think, to pick up the right things to build a nest with."

She began by searching through the tall grass until she discovered some long roots, fine but very strong. She wove all these together in a crotch of the bush, covering it with green leaves until at last she thought her dear little home was



A NEST WITH FOUR PRETTY EGGS

hidden. Then she searched further and found some soft moss that she picked to pieces with her sharp bill, and

she got a few long hairs over in a field where a horse was grazing.

She worked so hard that she hardly stopped to eat. Her mate sat close by, singing a happy, sweet song to cheer her.

A young girl living near the woods, who was ill, was happy just from listening to that sweet song.

At last the nest was finished, and a beautiful piece of work it was. Mr. and Mrs. Sparrow were both so proud and happy that they could hardly stop singing all day.

"O mother," said Alice, the little sick girl, "how sweetly the birds sang this morning in the woods! I woke up early with the old pain. I was going to call you, then I began to listen to the birds. They sounded so happy that while I was listening the pain went away and I fell asleep."

"It must have been the song sparrow that I saw flying into the woods yesterday," said Alice's mother. "The birds are building their nests this month. If nothing disturbs them, we shall have a great many dear little birds flying around here in the summer. They eat the worms and bugs that harm our trees and flowers."

"Is the English sparrow good for anything, mamma?"

"Every bird is of some use, dear. I have seen English sparrows eating the cankerworms that are so troublesome," answered her mother.

"What are cankerworms?" asked Alice.

"They are little green worms that come down from the trees on a fine thread like silk. They eat the leaves of the trees, and then swing down to the ground. They do so much harm to our trees that we ought to be thankful to the English sparrow for eating them."

"Are there many kinds of sparrows?" asked Alice.

"Yes, the sparrow family is a large one. There are a song sparrow, a tree sparrow, and a field sparrow that look very much like the English sparrow. Then there are a white-throated sparrow and a fox sparrow that are very handsome birds. Some people dislike the English sparrows and want boys to kill them."

"I don't see how any one can kill a little bird," said Alice. "It seems so cruel to take the life of such happy little creatures."

While Alice and her mother were talking about sparrows, Mr. Sparrow was searching for insects to carry to Mrs. Sparrow, who was sitting on the pretty nest.

When he flew to her with a nice morsel for her breakfast, she told him that she had one little blue, speckled egg under her soft breast. Mr. Sparrow was so pleased that he flew up on a high branch of a tree, and sang a song for all the birds in the woods to hear. "We have one pretty egg! we have one pretty egg!" All the birds heard him and sang with him, until the woods were filled with such beautiful songs that Alice and her mother stopped talking to listen.

A few days passed, and the sun shone brightly. The spring blossoms were appearing everywhere. Mr. and Mrs. Sparrow were the happiest birds in the woods, for in the nest were four of the prettiest eggs that a bird could wish to have.

Mr. Sparrow brought Mrs. Sparrow food every day. She did not often leave the nest, but one day she wanted to dip her bill in some cool water not far away, so she left the nest for just a minute. She got her drink, and flew back to the bush where her nest and its pretty eggs were.

As she lighted on a tree close by, her little heart beat fast, for something dreadful was happening. Two girls were standing by her bush. They were reaching out their hands and touching her precious nest.

It could not be that they were going to steal it! Her dear home that she had taken such pains to build, and her pretty eggs! Could they be such cruel children?

Mrs. Sparrow screamed with terror. Mr. Sparrow, who was hurrying home with a green worm for his mate's supper, heard her, and knew that something terrible had happened. He dropped the worm and chirped loudly to the girls: "Come back, come back! Oh, bring back our nest and our pretty eggs! You will break our hearts!"

The thoughtless girls kept on and went out of the woods, carrying the nest with the eggs still warm from

the mother sparrow's breast. All the birds in the woods mourned with the sparrows and cried, "Shame! shame! to steal the nest and the eggs of an innocent bird. Think how much good she has done to your trees, plants, and flowers."

The sun went down, and all the long twilight the poor little sparrows grieved. They sat in a tree looking down at the bush where a few hours before they had had such a happy home. Now they were homeless, and it would take them a long time to build another nest. First they would go to some more lonely place and try to get away from children who rob birds.

"Mother," said Alice, "it seems to me that the birds are crying and worrying about something. I haven't heard them sing one happy song this afternoon. Once their voices sounded so sad that I am afraid something has happened to them."

Just then Alice's nurse came into the room and said, "I saw two girls going out of the woods, and they had a bird's nest in their hands. I tried to make them carry it back, but they would n't."

"O mother! they have stolen our sparrow's nest, — and girls, too. I never thought girls would be so cruel."

Poor Alice began to cry. "I am sorry that she knows it," said Alice's mother. "I am afraid she won't sleep to-night. She loves the birds so much and their singing has made her so happy."

The little girls who stole the nest carried it home and played with it a few hours. Then they threw it away, never thinking or caring how much pain and sorrow they had caused. They had not only robbed the sparrows of their home, but robbed the neighborhood of their sweet songs; and robbed the woods of four little songsters that would have come out of the eggs and added so much to the happiness of the world.

MOLLIE'S FLIGHT

BEHIND an old red barn, under the shade of a large apple tree, a little girl was sitting one afternoon in early September.

The farm was on a hill, and from this seat under the tree there was a beautiful view of six miles of valley with its green fields, meadows, river, woods, and farmhouses.

On another hill was the village with its white houses and church spires.

It was a lovely scene, but the little girl was not looking at it, but at her



MOLLIE WITH HER FRIEND GYPSY

companion, a large cat. He was standing on his hind legs, with his front paws on her lap, looking into her face.

The child was speaking to the cat and he was listening. "I never liked it here," she was saying, "and I would have run away if it had n't been for you. Now they are going to send me away, my aunt says, to live with her sister, and she says that I can't take you with me. I will ask Miss Sargent, just as soon as I get there, to let me come back for you.

"If I could only take you I would be glad to go away from here, and you would be glad, too, my poor Gypsy, because Tom is so cruel to you. He is always watching to see if I save anything for you to eat, and he tells his mother if I feed you. Then she is angry and says you must catch rats and mice, but you can't catch them all the time, and I know you are often hungry, aren't you?"

Gypsy mewed as if he agreed with all his mistress said.

"We are going early, and aunt is going to drive me over. If uncle would take me, I am sure he would let me carry you, but he has gone away for several days. I suppose I won't have a chance to see you again before I go, but I will come back after you, Gypsy. I will find a place for you somewhere near me, so you must be patient until I come."

"What's that?" cried out a sharp voice. "I heard what you said, Miss."

With these words a boy of twelve came from his hiding place behind the barn, and picking up a stone threw it after the cat, who had run at the sound of his voice.

"Oh, ho! Miss Mollie, you are going to ask my aunt to let you have that old cat, are you? She hates cats, and she wouldn't have one in her house, and there's no barn where he can hide as he does here."

"Then I'll find him a home somewhere else," said brave little Mollie, her eyes flashing and her cheeks very red. "He shan't stay here to be tormented and starved. If my aunt won't let me carry him with me to-morrow, I will come back for him."

"You needn't think about coming back, for you won't get a chance, and if you did, you wouldn't find any cat here. I'll take care of him as soon as you are gone," answered Tom, with a grin.

Mollie burst into tears, and ran into the house where she shut herself in her room.

Mollie was an orphan. Two years before, her mother died, and she came to live with her uncle, Mr. Thomas Green. Mrs. Green was not pleased to have the care of Mollie. She was angry, too, that her husband brought Mollie's pet kitten, Gypsy, and insisted that she should be allowed to keep it.

Mrs. Green banished it to the barn, but Mollie visited it and tried to save part of her own food for the cat, sometimes going hungry that it might be fed.

Tom watched her, and if he saw her put aside a part of her food, he told his mother, who quickly put a stop to it.

Mollie and Gypsy should have found a friend in Tom, but instead he was their greatest enemy. Tom was so selfish, jealous, and disagreeable that no one liked him. Mr. Green saw that Mollie was not happy in his home, and he was making up his mind what could be done.

Just at this time his wife's sister, who lived in the village, in a pretty cottage on the hill, wanted a young girl to live with her.

Mrs. Green suggested that she should take Mollie. Mr. Green was willing, for he knew it would be a pleasant home for the child. So it was settled that Mollie should go.

Unhappy as Mollie was in her uncle's home, she dreaded a change. Miss Sargent was almost a stranger to her, and she imagined her to be very severe, because even Tom behaved very much better when Miss Sargent came to see them.

At supper it was settled that Mollie was to go the next forenoon at ten o'clock. Then Tom said, "Mollie says she is going to take her cross old cat, and I said that Aunt Sargent would n't let her keep him."

"I think Mollie ought to be thankful that she can have such a good home herself. She ought to know better than to take that miserable cat with her," said Mrs. Green.

Poor Mollie could eat no more supper. It seemed as if every mouthful would choke her, as she thought of Gypsy left to suffer.

Mollie stole out into the twilight, wondering what she could do. "I cannot leave Gypsy," she thought.

At last she decided upon a plan which she could carry out. She would not wait until to-morrow; she would go to-night and carry Gypsy with her. If Miss Sargent would not keep him, she would carry him about the village until she found him a good home.

In their many hours together, Mollie had taught him many tricks. He could give a paw like a dog, stand on his hind legs and walk, jump over her two hands held high, and lie down and make believe he was dead. He was always good-natured. Surely such a cat deserved the best of homes.

Yes, she would go to-night and carry Gypsy in her arms. It was a good many miles, but Mollie liked to walk, and Gypsy would be company for her.

Mollie sat very quietly in her own room until her aunt closed the house for the night, then she began to prepare for her flight.

She put on a thicker dress, took an apron to carry Gypsy in, and her boots, which she could not put on until she was out of the house. Then she got the red ribbon which she kept for Gypsy's neck, and stole softly downstairs and out of the house.

Suppose Gypsy could not be found. What a disappointment that would be! She went back of the barn and called him softly.

To her great joy he came at once, and rubbed against her, purring loudly. Then he stood up on his hind legs and begged, for he thought this visit was made to bring him something to eat.

Mollie sat down and began to tie on his ribbon.

"Poor Gypsy," she said, "I have nothing for you now, but I am going to carry you to a better home, and I think you will have a good breakfast."

She wrapped the apron about him and took him in her arms. Then she started down the lane which led to the road, keeping in the shadow of the trees. Gypsy put one white paw on her shoulder and looked curiously about.

Mollie walked very fast at first until she was quite a distance from the house.

The wind sighed among the trees, and once a little rabbit ran across their path. Gypsy struggled a little in her arms and mewed, for he was hungry.

They were both startled by a loud crashing in the bushes, but it was only a cow. Owls hooted over Mollie's head, but the brave little girl kept on.

Miss Sargent's house was in the village, at the top of the hill, and Mollie's heart beat fast when she drew near it. She had no idea what time of night it was, but she would not call any one until morning.

There was a cozy little porch with benches on each side. It was a fine place to rest, so Mollie sat down, the cat still wrapped up in her apron in her arms. She was

very tired, and in a few moments child and cat were in a sound sleep.

Miss Sargent got up early every morning. It was her delight to go at once to the porch to get the fresh morning air and to enjoy the grand view of the mountains.

On this beautiful September morning she arose early, as usual, and went to the door. She opened it and the first sight that met her eyes was a child asleep on the bench with a large cat in her lap.

"Why, what is this?" she exclaimed. These words awoke the cat, and he sat up straight in Mollie's lap and looked Miss Sargent in the face. "Well, well!" said she, more and more astonished. Then Mollie awoke slowly, and, opening her great black eyes, tried to make out where she was.

"Where did you come from, child, and how did you get here so early?" asked Miss Sargent.

Mollie jumped up quickly, holding Gypsy tightly in her arms.

"I'm Mollie, you know," she answered. "They were going to bring me here this forenoon to live with you, but I thought I'd walk over and bring Gypsy. I thought perhaps if you saw him you would like him, too. He's a very nice cat and minds everything I say."

Mollie was so pale that Miss Sargent feared she might faint. She reached out and took the cat, and drew the child into the house.

"Come in, and let me get you something to eat. I don't understand it. What was your aunt thinking of to let you walk over? The kettle is boiling. Hannah, make some cocoa just as quick as you can," she said.

She put the cat down gently in a chair and removed Mollie's hat and coat.

"May I keep him here with me? Will you let me have my Gypsy?" Mollie asked in a shaking voice.

"Keep whom? Let you have what?" Miss Sargent asked curiously.

"Gypsy, my cat. Aunt Sarah said I should n't bring him, and Tom said you hated cats. But he is good, he won't trouble you, and he'll catch mice if you have any."

Mollie hurried the words, while sobs arose in her throat.

"Of course you can keep him. Why not? I am very fond of cats and so is Hannah. Our old Dick died last week, and we shall be pleased to keep your kitty," said Miss Sargent.

This happiness was too much for Mollie, and she broke down and cried for joy.

"Poor child! You are so tired you ought not to sit up. When you have had some hot cocoa you will feel better."

Just then Hannah came with a cup of hot cocoa, which she gave to Mollie. After drinking it she began to smile, and soon she told Miss Sargent the reason for her flight.

About an hour later, Mr. Green appeared, looking pale and anxious. When he found Mollie in a little rocking-chair by the window, and Gypsy sitting on the window seat in the sun, he looked very glad.

He kissed Mollie and asked her how she came to run away. Miss Sargent very quickly told him the whole story. Mollie thought she had never seen her uncle so angry as when he heard of Tom's cruelty.

Mollie did not have to hunt up a home for Gypsy, for she and her pet had found a kind friend in Miss Sargent. In a few weeks' time you would hardly have recognized rosy, happy Mollie or the sleek, fat cat, Gypsy.

OLD BILLY'S CHRISTMAS

I

THE hour for closing school had come, and still the boys and girls in Miss Martin's schoolroom lingered in their seats. She was saying: "Our Christmas collection is much larger than it was last year. We had a tree, a little feast, and a good time then, and we can do it on the same amount this year. Now what shall we do with the ten dollars we have left?"

There was silence for a minute, then one of the girls said, "We might buy coal for some poor family."

"Do you know of any one who needs it?" asked the teacher.

"No," was the reply, "but I thought you might."

Miss Martin answered, "I do know of several families who need fuel, but six men have offered enough money to buy all the coal they need."

"What do you think we would better do with the money?" asked one of the boys. "It seems more like Christmas to make some one have a good time with it."

Miss Martin looked at her school for a moment without speaking, then she said, "Who of you has tried to share

a little of the Christmas joy with our faithful friends, the horse, the dog, or the cat? ”

Four hands went up, and Miss Martin called on Mary Prentiss first. Mary said: “I always have something on



TAKING OLD BILLY OUT OF HARNESS

the tree for my cat Flossie. Last Christmas she had a new cushion to lie on and a bag of catnip.”

Mary’s brother Tom was called on next, and he said, “I gave my dog Rollo a hard rubber ball last year and an extra good dinner.”

Then Robert Graves spoke, “Papa let me give our horse Fanny an extra feed and a new blanket.”

It was now Alice Maynard's turn. "We always give our animals a little feast and something that they can play with," she said. "We had such fun last year with a little toy that we could wind up, and both the cat and the dog chased it and played with it."

"I am glad to hear this," said Miss Martin, "for now I am sure of help in my plan for Christmas. I am going to ask you to help make a poor suffering animal happy on Christmas Day. Perhaps some of you have noticed an old horse that a rag and junk peddler drives to the city every day."

Nearly a dozen hands went up and voices broke out in: "I have seen him." "And I." "So have I."

"I see this man every afternoon as I go home from here," Miss Martin said, "and I spoke to him once about his horse. He said, 'My horse is all right. I feed him, but he is one of the poor kind.' The poor creature looks thinner and weaker every day. Some nights he can hardly crawl along, and his master always has a whip in his hand. Yesterday he seemed very lame. Now what do you say to buying this horse and giving him a happy Christmas?"

"Oh, let us do it!" cried all the children.

"A kind farmer has offered to keep the horse for us, until we decide what is best to do for him. When the peddler drives home the day before Christmas, Mr. Prentiss will call him into his yard and offer him some old iron he

has there. He will try to buy the horse, and if he succeeds, he will have him taken out of the wagon at once. Mrs. Prentiss has invited us to Robert's Christmas party, so we will be there to give the poor horse a welcome. Do you all like this plan?"

Every hand was raised, and eager boys and girls began to tell how they would try to make the poor old horse comfortable and happy.

Then school was dismissed.

II

It was the day before Christmas. Great preparations had been going on at the large, cheerful farmhouse for the Christmas party. The boys had set up a tree in the parlor. Some of the older girls had dressed it. The mothers had set a table with the good things that young people enjoy. The children had been out to give Robert's pony some sugar. Everything was ready for a good time, when about five o'clock an old wagon, drawn by a thin, limping horse, was seen at the foot of the hill.

The horse dreaded the hill; that was plainly to be seen. Horses hasten joyfully toward snug stables, a good supper, or a drinking fountain, and they also hold back from things that are painful.

So the poor old horse stopped at the foot of the hill. If he could have spoken in our language, he would have

said: "I cannot crawl up this steep hill; it is slippery and I am badly shod and lame. Besides, I am all tired out, and when I get home I have only a cold shelter, a little poor hay, and ice-cold water. Once I had a warm



ROBERT'S PONY

barn and a kind master. Now I am old and no one cares for me. I wish I could lie right down here and die."

His brutal owner gave him a cruel cut with the whip, and with great effort he started up the hill. The eager faces watching grew sad, and Robert Prentiss cried out, "I am going to tell that man what I think of him."

"If you make him angry, we can't get the horse," said wise little Mary.

The Prentiss house was halfway up the hill. Waiting outside was Mr. Prentiss, and as the horse slowly and painfully limped by, he hailed the man.

"Hold on! I have something you may like."

The man stopped and drove into the yard.

"I have a pile of old iron in my barn, and there is a pretty good stove with it. Do you want to look at it?"

The men went into the barn, watched by anxious eyes. Several boys stole out of the house and looked into the wagon for a blanket to cover the trembling old horse. He stood with drooping head, first lifting one foot and then another as he tried to rest.

"No matter," Robert whispered to them, "father will get him and then we will fix him up fine."

The men came out of the barn. "Look here," said Mr. Prentiss, "your horse is not fit to travel another step. He is too old for your work, anyway. I hate to see a horse like this in harness. Now we would like to give to you, to your family, and to this old horse a merry Christmas. I will give you the stove, the old iron, and a five-dollar bill, and you give me the old horse. I will lend you one of my horses to take you home with your load."

The man hesitated. "Give me ten dollars and I will do it," he said.

"Your horse is n't worth five," Mr. Prentiss said, "but I will give you all I said, and add a bag of corn meal, a bushel of potatoes, and a load of wood for a Christmas gift to your wife. I will send them to you to-morrow morning."

"Take him out," said the man. "You can have him."



OLD BILLY ENJOYING A SUMMER DAY IN THE FIELDS

At the word from Mr. Prentiss, half a dozen boys and girls appeared. In a short time the old horse was led into a wide stall, where two of the boys began rubbing his tired legs. Two more boys prepared a warm mash for his supper, another fixed the straw bedding, and two girls covered him with a good blanket which they had warmed.

The peddler stood looking on in surprise. What did it all mean — this care for a horse that he thought was not worth his feed? But he began to understand their kindness when he saw the gratitude of the cold, hungry, tired horse.

In Mr. Prentiss's snug stable, in a roomy stall, Old Billy was eating his warm mash with eagerness, and a happy group of children got as near as possible, to enjoy seeing him eat.

Now and then he would stop and look around as if to say, "Am I dreaming?" then rub his nose on the nearest boy.

At last the mothers called the children into the house, but amid all the joy of feasting and Christmas gifts, nothing gave the boys and girls such deep happiness as the thought of the old horse that was going to be tenderly cared for as long as he was able to take comfort in living.

DOCTOR KITTY

IT was Christmas afternoon. Mrs. Burns and her husband had finished their luncheon and were sitting before an open fire. Books, magazines, and flowers were about them, but they did not look happy. After a while Mr. Burns asked, "Was n't there even one thing among all those presents that seemed to please her?"

"There was nothing that she looked happy over," Mrs. Burns said. "She lay back on her pillows looking so white. I would have given anything to have made her smile. The doctor says that she is well now, but that she needs to be roused. He says that he never saw a child so sober all the time. Oh, I am so discouraged!"

"I thought that Christmas would cheer her up," said Mr. Burns. "I am sure that she had loads of presents."

Mrs. Burns's sister came in just at that moment. She was spending Christmas with them. She said: "You were talking about Edith. She had too many presents, and there was nothing very different from what she had before. Her room is full of things to amuse her; she has everything now, and yet you expect her to be delighted with more books, more dolls, and more games. She is too weak to read, and even too weak to play. You had

better have given her only one present, and then given the rest to some child who has n't so much."

"I did give some of her things to a child who does n't get many presents," said Mrs. Burns. "I picked out half a dozen books and other things, and sent them this morning to little Anna Raymond, who is just Edith's age."

"Did you tell Edith?"

"Why, no. What would be the use of that?"

"I think it would have pleased her more than getting anything herself. She needs something outside of herself to be interested in."

"I believe that you are right," said Mr. Burns.

Just then a maid came to the door and said, "There is a little girl here who wants to see Miss Edith. I told her that she could not see her, and then she asked for Mrs. Burns."

"I will see her," said Mrs. Burns. "Let her come in here."

We must go back a few hours and enter Mrs. Raymond's home of four rooms. Breakfast was over, and Anna was helping her mother wash the dishes.

After the morning's work was done, Mrs. Raymond put the Christmas packages on the table. There were not many, but there was always something. Anna saved her pennies and bought some little gift for her mother, and her mother sat up nights making a pretty new dress

or dressing a doll for Anna. Besides the presents for Anna and her mother, there were always two or three packages marked "Toodles" and "Kittikins."

Toodles was a mongrel terrier, blind in one eye, that Anna had found one winter day two years before, shiver-

ing with the cold. As no one claimed him, Anna's mother gave her leave to keep him.

Kittikins was a cat, a very beautiful cat, that had come to their house. It had been adopted as one of their family.



KITTIKINS AND HER BABIES

Mrs. Raymond and Anna went to their pretty little parlor, while Toodles and Kittikins followed close at their heels. The table was not covered with bundles, but there were enough to make Anna's eyes shine.

Mrs. Raymond looked a little sad. "I could not make

much of a Christmas this year, my dear," she said, "for work has not been plenty."

"That's all right, mother. You always have something nice for me," said Anna, as she began handing around the presents.

"Those are new holders that I made for you, mother, and there is a handkerchief that I bought for you. Toodles, here is a rubber ball for you; you lost your other one, and you must take care of this."

Anna and her mother had to stop and have a hearty laugh to see Toodles leap for the ball, bounce it on the floor, and catch it again.

"Here is a little bag of catnip, Kittikins, and a can of salmon. Mother bought the salmon for you, and it was so good of her to think of it. These two little bunches of rags sewed together, I made for Kittikins's babies.

"Now here is something for me. Oh, what a pretty dress! And a storybook! I hope it is a fairy story."

"I am afraid that is all, dear," said Mrs. Raymond, "excepting a little box of candy."

"Why, that is enough for anybody," said Anna.



TOODLES

Just then the doorbell rang. Mrs. Raymond came in and set a large box on a chair.

"What can it be, mother?" said Anna. "Is it really for us?"

Mrs. Raymond found a card on the box, and read, "From Mrs. Charles Burns to Mrs. Raymond and Anna."

"Oh, do hurry and open it, mother, I can't wait!" exclaimed Anna.

A chisel and hammer were found, and soon the cover of the box was off. Mrs. Raymond and Anna stood over it, too surprised and too happy for words.

"A doll! I never saw such a beauty except in a shop window. Books! O mother! six books for my bookcase that you gave me last year. Two games that we can play together evenings. Oh, what a sweet little workbasket! Is n't there anything for you, mother?"

"Yes, this pretty apron must be for me," she said, "and here is a breakfast jacket, exactly what I needed. And here are two boxes of candy and some oranges."

"Mother, did the little girl who has been ill so long send us all these beautiful things?"

"Her mamma sent them. I hope that little Edith sent them, too."

"Is she very ill, mother?"

"No one seems to know what the matter is now. The doctor says that she won't get well unless she cheers up."

Anna sat very still, thinking, and holding her new doll on her lap. Toodles, seeing Anna so quiet, went to the kitchen and in a moment came walking in on his hind legs with a puppy biscuit in his mouth, which he put in the doll's lap.

Kittikins was rolling over and over on some pieces of catnip. Then she jumped up and began a frolic with her handsome kittens.

Pretty soon Anna spoke: "Mother, I want to do something to cheer that poor sick girl who can't find anything to make her laugh. You said that I could keep Kittikins's two babies until we could find a good home for them. I am sure that this is just the place for one of them, and he will cheer Edith and make her laugh."

"Perhaps she would not like him, and her mother might not let her have him," said her mother.

"Let me try, mother, please. Let me go to-day and make her a Christmas present of a kitty."

"It is worth trying," answered Mrs. Raymond. "I will fix up a pretty basket for him, and line it with red."

Mrs. Burns was waiting to see what little girl was asking for Edith.

Anna came in quietly. "I am Anna Raymond," she said. "I came to thank Edith for the lovely presents."

"I am afraid Edith is n't strong enough to see you," Mrs. Burns said.

"Let her go in and see Edith," Mr. Burns said. "It may cheer her up, and she need n't stay long."

"Yes," said the auntie, "let her go."

Mrs. Burns touched a bell and a nurse came in. "This little girl is going to make a call on Edith. You must watch and not let her stay long enough to tire her." Then, turning to Anna, she said, "You had better leave your coat in here, and your basket."

"If you don't mind, I'll go in just as I am. I shan't stay long and I have a little present to show Edith."

"Oh, very well," Mrs. Burns said, and when the door was closed, she turned to her sister, smiling. "I believe the child wants to show one of her presents to Edith."

When the door into Edith's room was closed, Anna looked at the pale face on the pillow and choked up. She made an effort to smile and said: "I want to tell you how beautiful the Christmas box was that you sent me, and what a good time mother and I had opening it. I never had such a lovely doll before, and —"

A sharp little *mew, mew* was heard, and a yellow head bobbed up out of the basket held in Anna's hands.

"Oh, oh! it's a kitty, a dear little, live kitty," cried Edith, sitting up in bed. "Is it for me? I love kittens and I have always wanted one. Give her to me. Put her in my arms. Oh, the darling!"

Anna opened the basket and a yellow, fluffy ball leaped out and sprang upon Edith's bed. The nurse exclaimed,

"O Miss Edith! I don't know what your mother will say," but when she saw Edith's face, she slipped quietly out of the room, leaving the children together.

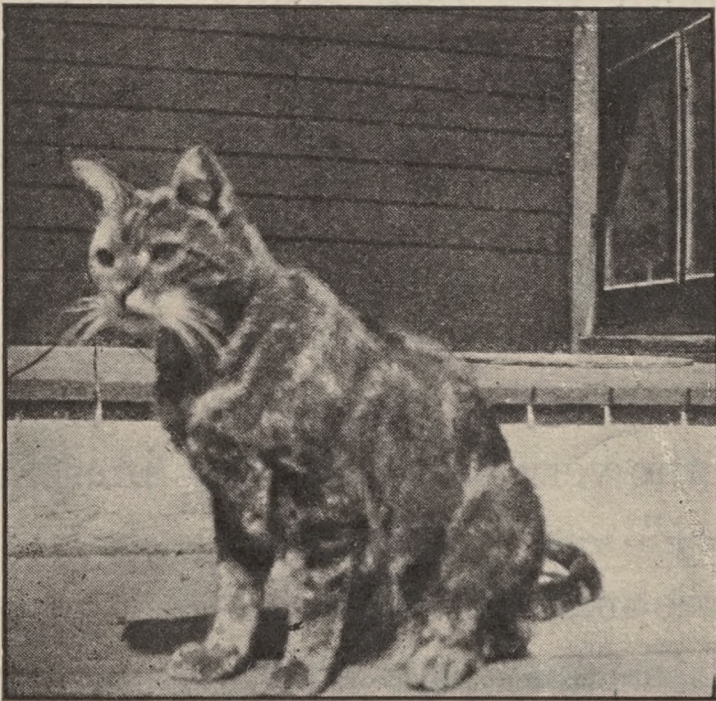
Fifteen minutes, then a half hour passed by. Nurse had peeped into the room several times, and now she thought it best to go to Mrs. Burns. Mr. and Mrs. Burns and the nurse went together to Edith's room. Edith was sitting up in bed, looking like a different child. Anna was on a low stool near the bed. She had a bunch of cloth, made to look like a mouse, tied to a string and was tossing it about. A little ball of fur and fun was leaping in the air, rolling on the floor, turning somersaults, flying up on the bed and off again like a flash, and two children's voices were heard in merry shouts of laughter.

Edith looked up when her father and mother came in, and cried in a happy voice, "O papa, mamma, see my dear, darling kitty! It is the very best Christmas present that I ever had in my life!"

"It is a beautiful Christmas gift, dear," Mrs. Burns said, stooping down and kissing Anna. "Thank you a thousand times. My little girl must rest now, but you will come and play with her to-morrow, won't you? You may leave Doctor Kitty. We will take good care of him." That is how the big handsome cat that sits in a sunny window, watching for a girl with pink cheeks and bright eyes to come home from school, got his name of Doctor Kitty.

"OLD WATSON'S" VALENTINE

TWO boys were in Mrs. Merrill's sitting room, looking over valentines; their merry laughter attracted the attention of a pretty brown-eyed girl who was reading in a low rocking-chair by the open grate. She put her



TOMMIE

book down, arose, and, going up to the table, looked over the boys' shoulders at a row of comic valentines laid out before them.

"What ugly-looking things!" she said. "I don't see what you want with them."

"We are going to have some fun St. Valentine's eve," answered

her brother. "Don't you see whom this one looks like?"

"No, I'm sure I don't," replied Alice.

"It's old Watson, the harness maker that lives over on B Street, old Watson and his cat, just true to life," said Richard Way, laughing.

"If it is old Watson, as you call him, I am very sure mamma would not like Edward to send that ugly picture to him, and I don't believe your mother would think it was kind, Richard, either."

"Oh," answered Richard, still laughing at the pictures, "my mother does n't care what I do if I keep out of mischief."

"I call it mischief to send ugly valentines," said Alice.

"Oh, nonsense, Allie!" said her brother, roughly but not unkindly, "it's only fun."

"What is only fun?" asked a very pleasant voice, as a sweet-faced little lady came into the room.

"Fun to send that ugly picture to a man the boys call 'Old Watson,'" said Alice.

"Old Watson?" said Mrs. Merrill, inquiringly. "Oh, yes, I know whom you mean. Poor Mr. Watson, the harness maker, who lives all alone with his cat in two little rooms on B Street. Yes, I know him. I stopped there last week to get him to fix the checkrein when I was out with the pony cart. He looked very pale, and when I asked him if he had been ill, he said he had suffered a good deal with rheumatism this winter, so that for several weeks he was n't able to work. What is the fun you expect to have with him, boys? I hope it is something that will please him, for I think he has a pretty hard time."

"The boys sent him a lot of funny cards and valentines last year," said Richard, slowly, "and he got so

angry that he shouted at them and said he'd complain of them."

"Do you think," said Mrs. Merrill, very gently, "it would seem funny to you if you were an old man and had rheumatism to be called on a cold night to the door to receive a valentine like that? Just put yourself in his place, boys."

The boys evidently were doing some very hard thinking, for neither of them spoke.

"May I ask," said Alice, pointing to the picture of a very ugly woman in a short skirt, a felt hat, and wearing spectacles, "whom that is intended for?"

"Don't you know that funny-looking woman who is on the street so much? I see her every day. She lives on Green Court," said Edward, slowly.

"Yes, I know her," answered Mrs. Merrill; "I know her very well. She is a doctor, and gives nearly all her time to visiting the poor. She won't mind the valentine one bit if it will make you boys very happy to send it to her, for her life is spent in trying to make people happy."

Edward crumpled up the valentine into a ball in his hand and threw it into the fire, and Richard took up the one intended for "Old Watson" and treated it in the same way.

"The others are for the boys," said Edward, as he turned from the fire.

"That is better," said his mother. "If it amuses you boys to send each other comic valentines, I'm sure it does not do one any harm, but what fun there is in sending them to grown people, particularly to the old and poor and lonely, I am not able to see."

"Nor I," said Alice.

"Well, I don't know exactly myself what the fun is, only that we run, and hide, and laugh, and have a jolly time trying to knock at the door or ring the bell and get away before we are seen," answered Edward.

"Suppose you could do all that and make people happy instead of angry, wouldn't there be more fun in it?" asked Mrs. Merrill.

"Of course," said both boys; "but how can we?"

"Let us sit down and talk it over," said Mrs. Merrill. "I think I see a way for you to have a very good time St. Valentine's eve without making any one unhappy. You shall carry poor Mr. Watson a valentine, and it will be one that will make him laugh as well as you."

"Oh, what, mamma?" cried Edward.

"We will pack a basket of good things for him, and you boys can hang it on his door, knock, and run away as fast as you like."

"Good!" said Alice. "I'll help."

"And you may carry a valentine to the kind doctor too," said Mrs. Merrill. "You can go to-morrow and buy some pretty valentine cards with a few words or a line of

poetry on them, and I will get some other valentine gifts; then we will arrange them some pretty way in boxes, or baskets, or bags, and for all those you intended a comic valentine you can plan one a little different."

"We'll do it," cried the boys, joyfully, "and we won't send any comic valentines at all. Here goes"—and in a moment the valentines were all blazing brightly among the coals.

It was the thirteenth of February and a very cold day. The wind whistled through the cracks of the little building where Mr. Watson had his two rooms. One, on the front, was his shop; back of it was a larger room where the old man cooked, ate, and slept. It was seven o'clock, and he was sitting over the stove talking to his cat, that had jumped up on his knees.

"Poor Tommie, I'm sorry for you. There isn't anything for your supper but dry bread. I'll soak it in a little warm water, for you can't eat dry bread much better than I can. Poor fellow, I wish I could take better care of you."

The cat stroked against the old man's coat sleeve and mewed a little, as if he were answering back, and the old man spoke again.

"It's the darkest time I ever had. Not a cent in the house, and there is only a little dry bread left. Mr. Jones said he would pay me this week. Perhaps he'll come

to-night, but I don't believe he will. I am afraid the boys will be banging at my door all the evening just as they did last year, and I will have to go for fear it might be a customer. Last year I got a bad cold by it. O dear! this is a hard world for a poor old man."

With a heavy sigh Mr. Watson got up and went to his empty closet. Only a half loaf there, dry and hard, but the old man was faint with hunger, and he brought it out and put it on the table; then he poured some hot water into a mug, and a little into a saucer. It was a scanty meal for two.

There was a knock at the street door, a sharp, sudden rap. "It's those mischievous boys, I know. But it might be Mr. Jones, so I suppose I must go to the door."

He hobbled to the door and opened it. No one was in sight. As the door swung back something hit against his hand. It was a basket.

"I won't touch it; there's some trick about it," he said, and was closing the door when a young girl who was passing suddenly stepped up to the door.

"Let me help you," she said. And in a moment a covered basket was in his hand, and she had gone by.

Mr. Watson took the basket in and set it on the table. He felt afraid to open it. Then Tom, the cat, jumped up suddenly from the chair onto the table and began to sniff at the basket and cry. Mr. Watson put him down and lifted the cover.

There was a card on top, and some lines written on it. Mr. Watson read,

Within this basket, friend of mine,
Look, and you 'll find your valentine.

He lifted a white paper and found a mince pie, some sandwiches, and doughnuts, and under these a package of oatmeal, some eggs, and a can of salmon.

Mr. Watson lifted his hands and his eyes to heaven, exclaiming, "Thank God! that's the first good valentine I ever had in my life! Now we won't starve."

He began joyfully to set the table for his supper, when he heard another knock and the sound of running feet. "That is boys, I know. I've a good mind not to go." But he looked at the basket and took courage.

Opening the door again he saw that something was hanging on the knob. It was a box carefully tied up. He took it to the light and read, "Mr. Watson, from St. Valentine."

He opened it carefully; it was full of small packages. There were coffee, tea, a can of condensed milk, sugar, some biscuits, and a special little box, marked "Tom's valentine," contained some cut pieces of beef.

Mr. Watson could hardly believe his good fortune. A happy thought came to him. "If it's the boys that have sent me this good valentine, I'll give them a chance to see how I enjoy it." He drew up the shades

in the room he was in and in the front of the shop; after which he went to work setting out the good things on the table.

It was later in the evening. Mr. Watson and Tommie had had a fine supper, and Tommie was purring before the stove when the knocks began again, and more valentine gifts arrived. By nine o'clock the table and the floor under it were covered with boxes, bags, and baskets, and the old man had enough provision to last him until spring. As the last package was delivered, the boys sent out a merry shout, "Good night!" and Mr. Watson shouted back, "God bless St. Valentine!"

About nine o'clock that evening a crowd of rosy, laughing boys were going home. As they passed Green Court, one of the boys said, "I wonder how the woman doctor liked her valentines."

If they could have looked in the little house down the court, they would have seen a plain-looking, spectacled woman bending over a beautiful bunch of flowers with a look of joy lighting up her pale, tired face, and they would have heard her say: "Who could have thought of doing me such a kindness! I came home tired and discouraged, but these lovely gifts have revived me. I feel like another woman."

Then she began taking from several boxes and baskets, prettily tied up, grapes, oranges, apples, delicate little cakes and biscuits, and glasses of jelly, all the time

thinking of the suffering poor people whose sick rooms she would be able to gladden the next day.

The boys stopped on a corner before they separated, and one said, "I am sure Mr. Watson was pretty hungry from the way he hurried to get his supper."

"Well, it's the best fun I ever had on St. Valentine's eve," said another, "and I can see it's a lot better fun than stirring up people and making them angry with comic valentines. I propose we send a vote of thanks to Ned's mother."

"Three cheers for Mrs. Merrill's comic valentines!" said Richard, and all the boys gave a hearty shout, then ran singing down the street, full of the joy, the sweetest in all the world, that making other people happy always brings.

A HAPPY THANKSGIVING

I

IT was the night before Thanksgiving and cold enough for snow. The wind was blowing in sharp gusts, as if to drive every living creature into some shelter.

In the dining room of a small city house a boy and a girl, Martin and Ruth Belton, were sitting. On one end of the dining table were a plate, cup, and saucer, set neatly upon a tray cloth; on the other end were some books which the boy was studying. He got up every now and then to join his sister, who was looking out of the window.

"Mother is late to-night," he said at last, anxiously. "I think it is too bad to keep her so late the night before Thanksgiving."

"I suppose she is finishing a dress that somebody is going to wear to-morrow," said Ruth. "Everybody but us seems to be going away or having company. We have nowhere to go and nobody to visit us."

"We shall be lucky," said Martin, "if we have a Thanksgiving dinner. Mother said she could n't afford much of a dinner unless she is paid to-night for her work."

A gust of wind swept down the street just then and rattled the blinds. When it died out Ruth said: "Hark! I thought I heard a cat crying in the back yard. It may be that poor cat that we saw the other day running away from our garbage pail. I suppose she is cold and hungry. Mother thought that some family must have moved and left her. I am going to see if she is in the yard now."

Martin and Ruth looked out of the kitchen window into the back yard. In the moonlight they saw a cat crouching against the shed door, mewing pitifully.

"She is asking us to let her in," said Martin. "I will go and open the door."

"Let me go," said Ruth. "Homeless cats and dogs are apt to be afraid of boys."

"I would n't be so mean as to hurt a poor, hungry, homeless cat or dog," said Martin.

"I know you would n't, but the cat does n't know it. You get a saucer of bread and milk. I am sure mother would let us have it, and I will try to coax her in." Saying this, Ruth went into the shed and opened the door very softly.

The cat ran away a step or two, and mewed mournfully as she looked up into Ruth's face. Ruth held the door open and stepped out of sight. She called gently, "Pussy, pussy," and the cat came in, but she was ready to run if any one tried to catch her.

Martin opened the kitchen door a little way and handed Ruth the saucer of bread and milk. Ruth put the food on the floor, as far from the outside door as she could. With a look into Ruth's kind face the starving



THE THANKSGIVING GUEST

cat approached the saucer. She was so hungry and lapped so eagerly that Ruth had no trouble in closing the outside door.

"Now we have her! Won't mother be glad!" Ruth exclaimed.

"And now we have a Thanksgiving visitor," laughed Martin, as the two children went back into the kitchen and closed the door.

"When mother comes," said Ruth, "I think we can get her in here where it is warm. If we take her in now, she might run out when we open the door for mother. It is better for her to be in our shed than out of doors, and the bread and milk will do her good."

As the children were about to sit down the bell rang, and Martin and Ruth rushed to open the door. A slender little woman loaded with bundles stood on the threshold. The eager children dragged her into the hall, took her bundles, and led her into the warm dining room.

"Dear mother, you are so late! The kettle is boiling, and I will make the tea in a minute," said Ruth.

"And I will toast the bread," said Martin.

"I have had a good supper, dears, but you may make a cup of tea for me, Ruth. I hope you had your supper long ago."

"Oh, yes, we had ours at six, as you told us. Let me take your hat and jacket, mamma. I know you are tired," said Martin.

"I am tired, but it rests me to come home to such dear, thoughtful children," Mrs. Belton said. "I am happy too, because I was paid and can afford a good dinner for you to-morrow. After I have had my tea, you may help me stone raisins, pick over currants, and

make cranberry jelly. I will make a plum pudding for you this evening."

Ruth set the teapot on the table, and then helped Martin open packages of nuts, raisins, apples, oranges, cranberries, squash, and sweet potatoes. As they spread out the fruit and vegetables on the kitchen table, Ruth remembered the little stranger in the shed.

"The poor pussy that you pitied so much is in our shed, mamma, but it is so cold there that I think you will want us to bring her in here," said Ruth.

"Oh, I am so glad, Ruth! I have been thinking about the poor animals out in the cold to-night, with no one to feed them or give them shelter. I was wishing that I could get some of them, take them in, and give them a Thanksgiving dinner. I bought some meat on purpose to coax that very cat that you have taken in."

Mrs. Belton went out into the shed and found the cat crouching in one corner on an old mat. She cried when she saw Mrs. Belton and Ruth, but she did not move. "Run in and get that basket in the closet," she said to Ruth. "Put the piece of blanket in it that I took off the ironing board yesterday. She needs a bed, and I am so thankful that you took her in."

In a moment Ruth came back with the basket. "That is a fine bed for her, mamma," she said.

"Put it on the floor, Ruth, and I will put pussy in it. Now we will carry her to the warm closet under the stairs.

I will give her some supper before I go to bed, and I hope she will be all right in the morning."

II

Thanksgiving morning was cloudy and cold. The children were up early, but when they came downstairs, they found their mother busy cooking good things for the day.

"If we only were going to have some company," said Ruth, "it would seem more like Thanksgiving. But we can have a good time anyway, because we will all be together."

"We have some company, my dears," Mrs. Belton said cheerfully; "we have three Thanksgiving guests."

"Where are they?" Ruth asked.

Mrs. Belton opened the closet door wide, and a loud purring was heard. "Come here and take a little peep," she said. There in the basket was the homeless cat, her eyes full of mother love as she washed two of the sweetest little kittens that the children had ever seen.

"Oh, mother, aren't they cunning? How thankful I am that we took her in last night!" cried Ruth.

"The little kittens would have died," said Mrs. Belton, "if you had not listened to the poor creature's cry for help, and perhaps the mother would have died, too."

"I do not see how people can be so cruel as to desert a cat or a dog, or how they can turn one away from their door!"

"Now, children, I am going to ask you to invite another guest. You know deaf Mrs. Bruce who has a room on the third floor is old and very lonely. I found out that she was going to be alone to-day, and I would like to invite her to take dinner with us at five o'clock this afternoon. That is the lonesome time, when it is growing dark, and one has been alone all day. Would you like it?"

Neither of the children spoke for a moment, then Ruth said: "If I were deaf, and poor, and old, I would like to have some one invite me to dinner. It won't be quite so jolly for us, though."

"And you, Martin," asked Mrs. Belton; "what do you say?"

"If you and Ruth say so, I would like it, too."

"Then I will write a note and send it up by you, Ruth, and you may wait for an answer."

Mrs. Belton sent the note, and Ruth came back, smiling, and said: "She was so glad that she thanked me over and over again. She sent you this note."

The note said, "You are very kind and thoughtful, and I accept with pleasure."

"We'll have a party, after all," said Ruth, "Mrs. Bruce and Mrs. Pussy with her two babies."

It was a happy day for all, and after a good dinner Mrs. Bruce told them interesting stories of the pets she had had when she was a little girl.

"It has been such a happy day," said Ruth, when Mrs. Bruce had left them. "Martin and I thought we should n't have any Thanksgiving at all."

"The reason why we have all enjoyed the day so much is because we were giving happiness as well as receiving it," said Mrs. Belton.

The children stepped softly to the closet door and looked in a moment upon mother Pussy. She was purring happily, while two little heads rested on her warm, loving heart.

"Good night, dear pussy! Good night, dearest mother," the children said, as they went smiling up to bed.

JOCKO'S MISSION

HELEN and Willie Marston were just getting over the measles. It was warm and pleasant October weather, but they were not yet allowed to go downstairs. Their mother had been obliged to leave them for a few hours, but Helen was so careful of her four-year-old brother that it was safe to leave her in charge. A table was in a sunny bay window, and here Helen and her little brother were playing with Willie's box of blocks.

Helen had just arranged the blocks for a bridge, when Willie was attracted by the sound of a hand organ.

"O Helen," he said, "it is the monkey man! I am sure it is the man with the little monkey he calls Jocko. I want to see the dear little monkey dance and take off his cap. Come and look out of the front window."

"We mustn't, Willie, for the front window is open. Mamma said we must not go near it. Don't you remember what Katie told us? She is sure that this man



JOCKO

lives near her sister. He is an Italian, and he calls his monkey Jocko. He beats him and treats him cruelly to make him do tricks. I don't feel as if I wanted to see him again."

"But I do!" persisted Willie. "I want to see the monkey. I don't want to see the bad man."

"Willie, dear, listen. You know that we are little soldiers, and mamma is our captain. Don't you want to be a good soldier, Willie, when the captain is away?"

"Yes," Willie said slowly, "I do, but I do wish I could see the monkey."

Just as he said this, Helen cried out: "O Willie, look! the monkey has come to see you."

Willie turned to the front window. There on the window seat sat a little, shivering black monkey in a red jacket and plumed hat. He looked at the children in a sad way, as if he were saying, "Look at me! see how cold and hungry and tired I am, and take pity on me!"

The children stood still, looking at him. They were too much surprised to speak. The little monkey came forward, politely taking off his hat.

Just then a shrill whistle was heard outside—a sound which little Jocko seemed to dread, for he fled toward the children and hid behind Helen's chair.

Helen took the little creature in her arms and sat down, and Willie began to pat the funny black face which looked so babylike.

"O Helen, how he does shake! What can we do for him?" asked Willie.

"I think it would be a good plan to give him some warm milk. He seems very cold, and I dare say he is hungry," said Helen.

"He is all dusty too. He ought to have a warm bath. I'll tell you what to do, Helen. We will give him a nice bath in the little tub. Won't that be a splendid idea!"

"Yes, I think this poor little thing must have a chill, he shakes so. We will give him a warm bath. You hold him, Willie, while I get it ready."

They placed the tub near the open fire on the mat. Helen took Jocko and unfastened his little red jacket. She was so gentle that the little creature seemed to understand that no harm was meant. Helen gave a cry when his back was bare, for there were marks of cruel blows.

"O Willie," she cried, "it must be the Jocko that Katie told about! I am sure of it now, for see where he has been whipped! I am glad he ran away, and I am glad he came here to us."

"We will never, never give him up, will we?" said Willie, with tears in his eyes.

"I hope not. I'll ask papa to buy him," answered Helen.

When Jocko was put in the tub, he seemed very much astonished and tried to jump out. As Helen softly

sponged him in the warm water, he made up his mind that he liked it, and made such funny faces that the children were much amused.

Helen was a wise little nurse, and the bath was a short one. While she was drying Jocko on a soft towel, Willie put milk in a saucepan and held it over the fire. They gave it to Jocko in a little tin cup, which he held in one of his hands. In the other hand he held a seedcake, and he began to eat and drink as if he were enjoying himself.

If Jocko could have told them that his master had given him no breakfast, they would have pitied him more than ever.

"Now he has had his bath and his luncheon, he must be put to bed. Perhaps he will get a nice nap, and wake up feeling better," said Willie. "I'll fix his bed."

Willie brought out a basket, even warming the blanket that Jocko was to lie upon. Then he put him in the basket and covered him up—all but his little black head. Jocko was ready enough to get into the warm basket, and he settled down and closed his eyes.

Helen and Willie sat by his side and watched him, keeping as quiet as if he had been a little baby. In a few moments he was asleep.

When the door opened and Mrs. Marston appeared, they were quite startled. They hurried toward her on tiptoe, making signs for her to be very quiet.

"O mamma, don't make any noise," they said in a whisper; "you will wake him up!"

"Wake up what? your doll? Why!" she exclaimed, as she saw a little black head in the basket, "what have you here?"

Helen turned back the quilt for her mother to see.

"A monkey! Where did it come from? Who brought it here?"

"O dear, he has waked up, mamma," said Willie. "He had just got into such a nice sleep after his bath."

"Tell me, Helen, what it all means," she said.

Helen told her mother all about the monkey's coming through the open window, and his wish to escape from his master. When she showed the marks of blows on his back, Mrs. Marston was full of sympathy for little Jocko.

When the doctor came home, the whole story was told again. After he heard the story, Doctor Marston agreed to buy the monkey, and the next day set out to find the owner. The man was not to be found anywhere, so Jocko became a member of Doctor Marston's family.

It was a cold autumn, and a severe winter followed. It was some time before Willie recovered from the measles, and he had no desire to go out of doors. If it had not been for Jocko, it would have been difficult to get him out at all.

When a warm day came, Doctor Marston would say: "Now, Willie, you must go out in the carriage to-day. You must wrap Jocko up and take him with you."

Willie would look out of the window and shiver, and say, "I don't care about going out, papa, but if you think Jocko needs it, I will go for his sake."

Jocko and Willie were almost always together. When the weather was bad and Willie was in the house for days, Jocko never left him. He followed him like a shadow, and rode upstairs and down on his shoulder, clinging to his neck or holding on with his little black paw to Willie's curls.

He and Willie played ball together; they knocked down ninepins and built houses with Willie's blocks. When Helen gave a little party to a few of her playmates, Jocko entertained them.

It was comical to see him sitting up in a little high chair, dressed in his pretty blue flannel jacket, eating and drinking with the children. He knew how to pass his cup, use a napkin, and bow politely when he was waited on.

The long, cold winter months passed, and Willie and Jocko played happily together.

Just as winter was nearly over, an epidemic broke out in the town, and Willie was taken ill. The day after he was taken, Jocko came down with the same symptoms. The two lay side by side, Willie on his little bed and Jocko in his basket.

When Willie refused his medicine, he was told to see how well Jocko took his spoonful. Willie would then take his. When he was restless and wished to get up, his mother would point to Jocko, lying so patiently in his basket. Willie would put his hot hand on Jocko's back and lie still again.

One night the father and mother watched by Willie's bed, and just at dawn Doctor Marston whispered: "He is much better. He will get well."

Just then Willie opened his eyes and smiled and asked for a drink of milk. As he drank it, he pointed to Jocko and said, "Give him some, too, papa." Jocko drank the milk; then both fell into a sound sleep.

Before long Willie was out of his bed, and Jocko out of his basket.

During the summer the people of a New Hampshire village were interested in the arrival of a new kind of summer boarder. It was a very funny little monkey, who came with the Marston family.

BERTHA'S CHOICE

BERTHA and Elsie Green sat on hassocks, watching a frolic going on before them. The actors in the play were Dolly Scratchett and her four little kittens — Whitefoot, Snowball, Beauty, and Buff.

There was another kitten, sitting on one side looking on and not playing with the others. That was Peg — the odd one of the family. The children were sorry that Dolly Scratchett should have such a homely little kitten, and they seldom noticed her at all.

Bertha and Elsie had laughed until they were tired at the kittens' antics, when Bertha stopped laughing and said: "O dear! I wish I knew which one to keep. Four of them are going to good homes where they will be treated kindly. Mamma won't give them away where they will be teased or half fed. Everybody is glad to get one of Dolly Scratchett's kittens, they are always so handsome and smart. I must choose the one that I want to keep for myself. It is very hard, because they are all so pretty."

"All but Peg," said Elsie.

"Oh, yes, all but Peg. I forgot all about Peg. I don't believe anybody will want her, she is so homely," said Bertha, as she looked pityingly at Peg.

Dolly Scratchett had grown sleepy and closed her eyes for a minute, though her long black tail waved gently to and fro. The four kittens made a spring, and all fell upon their mother, one biting her ears, another lying across her back, and two more chasing her tail. With



DOLLY SCRATCHETT'S FAMILY

a growl up jumped the mother, overturning the kittens, and walked out of the room.

Bertha and Elsie laughed until Elsie fell off her hassock to the floor. Bertha scolded the kittens for ill-treating their poor mother, and just then Mrs. Green appeared, smiling to see her children so happy.

"Children, it is time for supper; so carry the kittens downstairs," she said.

This was more easily said than done, but after much chasing, the kittens were collected, all but Peg, who had walked downstairs by herself.

Supper was over, the children in bed, and it was growing late in the evening, but Mr. and Mrs. Green still sat in the warm, cozy sitting room.

"It is such a cold night," said Mrs. Green, "that I dread to leave this warm room."

"It is an unusually cold night," said her husband, "and the wind is very high. I must go down cellar and look after the furnace. I wouldn't want to run any chance of a fire on such a night as this."

"Ask Kate to leave the kitchen door open, when she goes to bed," said Mrs. Green. Mr. Green answered, and then went down cellar.

Mrs. Green followed him as far as the kitchen. Katie was there sewing, and the room was very hot. Before the stove Dolly Scratchett and her kittens were stretched out, enjoying the heat.

"Why, Katie, you have n't put the kittens in the shed, yet," she said.

"Indeed, Mrs. Green, it is such a cold night that I am afraid they will freeze out there. I set a pail of water out there and it is frozen solid," said Katie.

"It does seem cruel to take them out of this warm

room. The change would be so great," said Mrs. Green. "You may bring their bed in here, and put it over under the table. I wanted the kitchen door left open, but I am afraid that they will run upstairs in the night."

"They will be only too glad to stay where it is warm," said Katie. "Cats like heat better than people."

Mrs. Green left the kitchen and went upstairs. Katie put some coal in the range and went to her room. She did not notice, as she slammed on the covers of the range, that the jar had opened a lower door, and that a bright red cinder had snapped out upon the floor.

The house was soon quiet, and everybody was fast asleep. The kittens slept soundly in their warm bed, all but one — that was Peg. Peg was uneasy; she stirred, sniffed, sneezed, and then sat up.

What was that smell in the room? Sometimes Katie cooked beefsteak, and that made a smoke and a smell, but Peg liked that. This was different. What was that bright red spot on the floor that glowed like a lamp? It was a queer place for Katie to leave a lamp.

Peg sneezed again, and her eyes began to water.

"I don't like this at all," she said to herself. "I think I would rather be out in the shed. I will go and see if I can get out."

Peg jumped out of the box and pattered along on her velvet paws to the door that led to the shed.

"Shut! I can't get out there. I will try another door

and see if I can't get upstairs. Phew, how I do sneeze!" She found this door open and ran upstairs in a hurry, to escape from the dreadful smell. She stopped at the bedroom door, and finding it closed, she set up a wail.

"*Mew, mew, mew!* Do let me in. I can't stay here." There was no answer, and Peg's wail grew into a howl.

"*Meow meow, meow!* Oh, I must get in! Open the door. Please do!"



PEG

Mrs. Green had heard the first cry, but she had kept still, hoping that the kitten would get tired and go away. At last she called her husband and said, "Do carry that kitten downstairs, for I am afraid that she will wake the children."

"Oh, what a bother she is!" said Mr. Green, as he lighted a candle. When he opened the door he forgot all about the kitten, but he said quietly to Mrs. Green: "Now dress yourself quickly. I am afraid there is a fire somewhere. I will come back in a minute and tell you."

Mrs. Green began to dress herself hurriedly. She was just going to awaken the children when her husband opened the door and came in smiling.

"It is all over now. I put it out with a few pails of water. Thanks to that kitten, it had n't got much headway. If it had, nothing could have saved us on such a night as this. I wish I knew which kitten it was that saved us," Mr. Green said, just as he was dropping off to sleep; "I would n't part with it for a great deal."

The next morning both Mr. and Mrs. Green slept later than usual. They were aroused by a shout from the next room, where their little girls slept.

"O mamma! O papa! do come in here. Peg is on the foot of our bed sound asleep. How do you suppose she got upstairs?"

After breakfast Mr. Green told the children of the night's adventure and their escape from fire. When he got through, Bertha ran out into the kitchen, caught up Peg, and brought her into the dining room.

She put her into her mother's lap and said: "You asked me yesterday, mamma, which kitten I wanted to keep for myself. I could n't decide then, but I have chosen now. I will keep Peg."

FRANCESCO'S SACRIFICE

THE sun was shining on the beautiful Bay of Naples on a May afternoon. A great steamer from across the ocean had come into the bay, and the boys were going out in boats to meet the big ship.

These boys leaped from their boats like little frogs, to catch the coins which passengers on the steamer threw into the water.

Among the many boys who earned money that way, Francesco was the quickest. He could dive the deepest, and stay under water longer than any other boy.

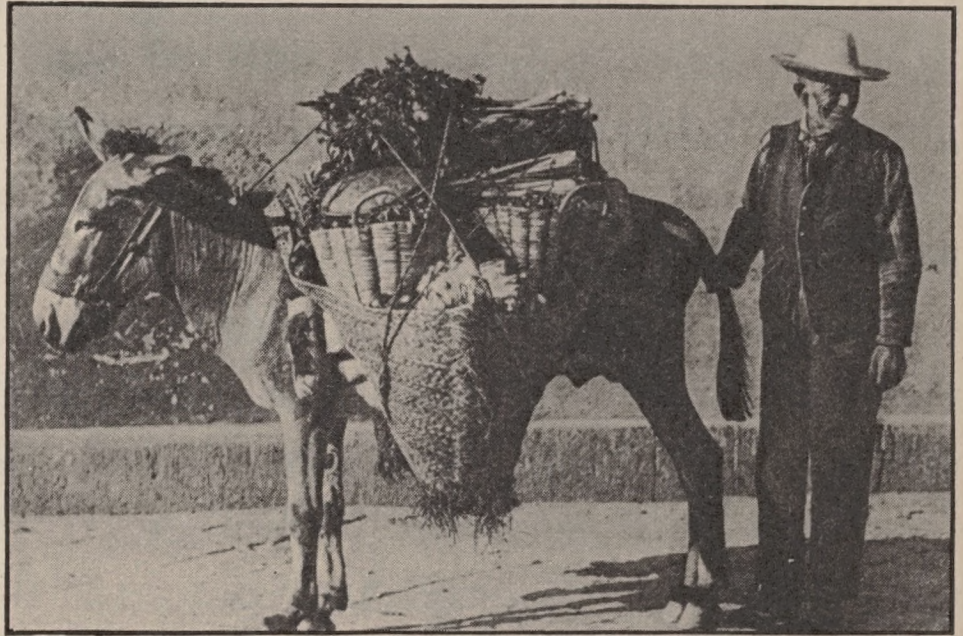
Sometimes he earned as much as one lira¹ in a week. His mother put it safely away for him, for Francesco's uncle was going to take him into his fruit shop when he had money enough to buy a share in the business.

Francesco told his mother that he did not want to work with his uncle. When his mother asked him why, he hung his head and did not answer. He thought his mother would laugh if she knew it was because his uncle beat Neddy, the poor little donkey that worked hard for him all day.

¹ A lira is about twenty cents. "Lire" is the plural of "lira."

Neddy was a patient little donkey and had worked for many years. He was growing gray around the nose, and his little feet were often sore and tired. Sometimes when his legs felt stiff he could not start at once, after the heavy baskets were swung over his back. Then his master would beat him, and this was what made Francesco so unhappy.

"Poor old Neddy," he would say to himself, "perhaps he may be sick to-day, or perhaps uncle has forgotten to give him any water."



NEDDY AND FRANCESCO'S UNCLE

Francesco did not dare to talk with his uncle about Neddy, for fear that he might be angry and beat the little donkey harder.

He often managed to put Neddy in his shed at night, and give him water and some treat for his supper. Sometimes it was lettuce from his own garden, sometimes a carrot, an apple, or a lump of sugar.

He loved Neddy, and Neddy showed in every way that he could how much he loved Francesco.

In order to earn money, Francesco did other things that his mother liked better than diving for coppers. He ran errands; he carried bags for tourists; he sold post cards. He was always trying to earn enough money to have a fruit stand of his own; then he would not need to work with his uncle.

One day Francesco came running to his mother and said: "Beppo is going to sell his fruit stand. He is going to America. If I can pay him forty lire before next month, I can own it. Let's count my money together and see how much I have."

They counted, and found that he had thirty lire.

"I am sure I can earn the rest, mother. I will work every minute," said Francesco.

"I will help you," said his mother.

"I will help, too," said his sister.

Francesco went to bed that night a very happy boy. "In only four weeks I shall have a business of my own," he thought. "Mother shall not work so hard then, for she is growing old."

Suddenly he thought of old Neddy—how thin and starved looking he was, how he was beaten, heavily loaded, and often hungry.

The next few weeks were busy ones for Francesco. He found many chances to earn money—carrying bags or running errands.

The last week came, and he needed only two lire more to make him the owner of the fruit stand.

One day when he was going home he met his friend Antonio.

"Did you know," said Antonio, "that your uncle is going to sell Neddy?"

"No," answered Francesco; "I did not know it, but I am glad, for I hope he will get a kinder master."

"He won't," said Antonio, "for Andrew Baldi is going to buy him, and you know how cruel he is to his donkeys."

"Why does my uncle want to sell Neddy? If he would give him food and treat him kindly, he could work some years longer. His teeth are bad and he can't chew the coarse hay, and often my uncle forgets to give him any water," said Francesco.

"Well," said Antonio, "a boy told me that Neddy had a heavy load on yesterday, and he stumbled and fell. They had to take his load off before he could get up, and your uncle was so angry that he beat Neddy, and the donkey kicked him. Then your uncle said that he would sell Neddy as quick as he could get anybody to buy him. He met Andrew Baldi, who told him that he would give him twenty-five lire if he could borrow the money by to-night."

"He shan't have him," said Francesco. "Neddy is always kind when I drive him. He would n't kick if he had n't been cruelly treated. It is hurry, hurry, hurry, all

the time, just as fast as he can go, and he never has a kind word said to him."

Francesco stopped, with his eyes flashing and his cheeks very red. The boys walked along slowly a little way, then Francesco began to walk quickly up a side street.

"Where are you going?" asked Antonio.

"I'm going to see Neddy," Francesco answered. "I don't know what good it will do, but I must see him."

In a dark and dirty shed poor little Neddy lay on the hard boards. He had no bedding, no water, and no food. He was lame and sore all over his poor little body from the hard beating his master had given him.

No one had been near him all day, but as he lay on the floor he heard footsteps, and he pricked up his long ears. Was he to get another beating? Could it be that some one was bringing him food and water? He raised his head and listened.

"I hope it is something to eat, but I am afraid," he thought. In a moment he knew the footsteps and brayed a feeble call for help.

On the way to the shed Francesco had stopped and got a loaf of bread. "Neddy likes bread soaked in water or goat's milk," he told Antonio.

The boys found Neddy lying on the floor, too lame and stiff to get on his feet.

"Oh, this is cruel!" said Francesco. "I must get a pail of water somewhere."

When the water was brought, the boys helped Neddy to his feet, and he drank as if nearly dying of thirst. Then they gave him little pieces of bread soaked in water, until he had eaten the whole loaf.

It was quite late in the afternoon when Francesco, sitting in the doorway with his mother and sister, saw his uncle coming down the street. He went to meet him and said, "I want to ask you not to sell Neddy to Andrew Baldi, who is so cruel."

"The rascal deserves a cruel master. He fell down on purpose, and then kicked me," said his uncle.

"O, uncle," cried Francesco, "he stumbled because you put too many things on his back, and he is getting old. And he kicked you because you hurt him."

"Why don't you buy him yourself if you pity him so much? I'll sell him if I can get even twenty lire for him," said his uncle, angrily.

Francesco looked at his mother. He turned red and then pale. "Mother," he said, "give me twenty lire, please."

Then he said to his uncle, "You say you'll sell him for twenty lire. I'll give you the money now and go with you and get him."

Francesco's mother got his money for him, and he put it into his uncle's hand.

"I have worked hard and earned this money," Francesco said, "and next week I was going to buy Beppo's fruit stand. But I must save Neddy."

"You," said his uncle, "you were going to buy that stand and go into business for yourself!"

"Yes, sir, I had all the money but two lire. I was going to see Beppo to-night. He knew about it and saved the stand for me."

"And you are silly enough to give that up to buy a cross old donkey!" said the old man.

By this time they had entered the shed, and the poor donkey was lying stretched out on the floor. It was a sad sight.

Francesco stroked his nose very gently.

"You'll have to help me get him up," he said. "After he is up, I think I can get him as far as our shed. I will make a good bed for him, and bathe and rub his legs. He has suffered a great deal to-day."

"I did n't feed him this morning, and I forgot to give him water. Has he had any?" asked the old man.

"Yes, I gave him a pailful this afternoon, and I fed him a little bread soaked in water," replied Francesco.

"Perhaps you had better leave him here to-night," the old man said. "I suppose I can put some straw under him and give him his supper."

Then he stood still and looked at Francesco.

"Boy," he said, "I'm going to tell you that you have



NEDDY WITH HIS FRIENDS

made me feel ashamed. Here's your money back. Go and get your fruit stand, and I'll help you to run it. You can have all the help that Neddy can give you. I bought another stronger donkey to-day, and you may help me take care of him, to pay for Neddy."

Francesco could not speak, but he did what was better than words. He put his arms around his uncle's neck and kissed him. Then he ran home as fast as he could to tell the happy news to his mother and sister.

HENRY AND JANET

ON a pleasant farm in Vermont there lived a man and his wife, who had no children.

There was a large barn on the farm for the horses and cows, and in a sunny place behind the barn there was a little house for the pigs.

Two dogs guarded the house and the barn, and in the house was a beautiful cat.

In spite of all their animals, Mr. and Mrs. Dale were often lonesome. They wished to see the bright faces and hear the happy voices of children. They wished they had either a boy or a girl to enjoy farm life with them. Mr. Dale wanted a boy, but Mrs. Dale said she would rather have a girl.

"A boy," she said, "would be apt to chase the cows, and whip the good old farm horse, or frighten the hens. A boy might be good to the dogs, but he would tease the cat and make her unhappy, or he might throw stones at the birds."

Mr. Dale did not think so. He said that many boys were as kind to animals and birds as girls were. There were sometimes cruel girls as well as cruel boys.

Finally, Mr. Dale decided to go to the city and get a



ON THE FARM

boy and a girl from an orphans' home. They would keep the one they liked best. After a good visit, the other could go back to the city.

One beautiful June day Mr. Dale drove home from the station with two children—one, a boy about nine

years old, and the other, a girl not quite eight. One of them he hoped to keep for his own.

Mr. Dale thought he would be able in a week or two to tell whether or not the children loved animals and birds, but it did not take him so long as that to find out.



HENRY, JANET, AND PRINCE

Both the children were very quiet as they drove to Mr. Dale's home. Henry spoke once and said, "This is a nice horse, is n't he?"

"Yes," said Mr. Dale; "would you like to drive him?"

"I don't know how to drive now," said Henry, "but I should like to learn."

When they drove into the yard, both dogs, Prince and Skippy, ran to meet them. Mr. Dale looked at the children as he took them out of the wagon, to see if they were afraid, but they were both smiling. Janet, the little girl, patted Skippy's head, and Henry put his arm around Prince's neck.

"May I help you unharness the horse?" Henry asked. "If you'll show me how, I can unbuckle some of the straps."

He followed Mr. Dale into the barn, patting first the horse and then Prince.

"Isn't this a grand barn!" he said. "Do you keep any cows here? I should like to take care of cows, I know. I would be very kind to them and never make them run."

"You may go down to the pasture with me by and by," said Mr. Dale, "and help me drive them home. But we must go into the house and see Mrs. Dale first."

Janet was in the house all this time with Goldie the cat in her lap, and Skippy was rubbing his head against her.

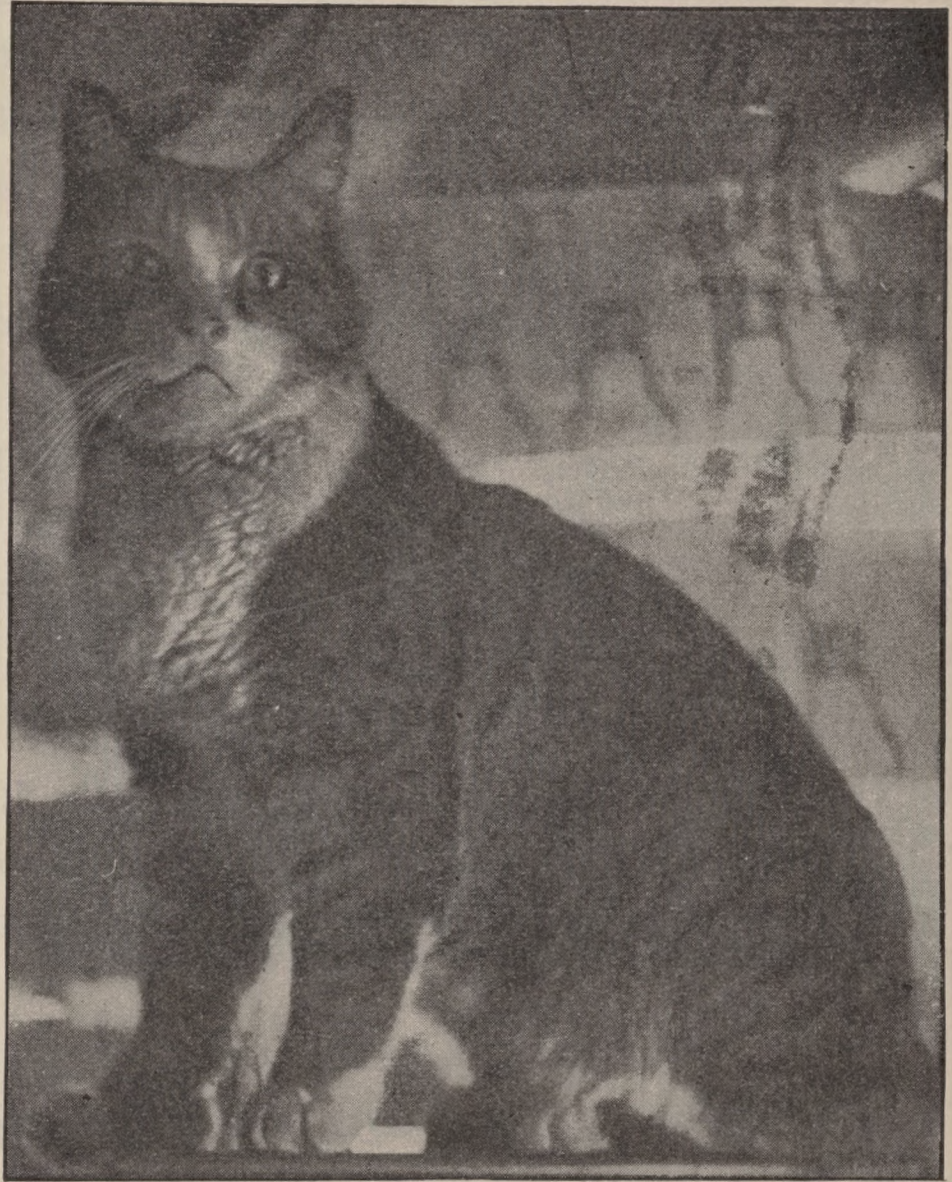
Mrs. Dale looked very happy. She was saying to herself: "This is the child for us. What a comfort she will be!"

Mr. Dale came in with Henry, and Prince was at his heels. Mrs. Dale expected to see Goldie run and hide at sight of a boy, but Henry put one hand gently on Goldie's head and held out the other to Mrs. Dale.

He said, "You have the most beautiful dogs and cat that I have ever seen."

Mr. and Mrs. Dale looked at each other and smiled.

At supper, when the two children sat down to the table, Prince placed himself behind Henry's chair, while Skippy lay at the feet of Janet. Goldie sat in a chair near his mistress, and now and then reached out a yellow paw to touch Henry on the arm. Later in



GOLDIE

the evening the dogs and the cat went out of doors.

When it was bedtime for the children, Janet went to the window. Mrs. Dale was curious and asked her if she wanted anything.

Janet said she was looking for Goldie, and asked, "Do Skippy and Goldie stay out all night? Prince is so big that nothing could happen to him. I should be afraid to let the others stay out for fear they might get hurt."

"Shall I go and call them?" asked Henry.

"You may if you like," said Mrs. Dale, "but Skippy and Goldie always come in before I go to bed, and Prince sleeps in the barn."

Mr. and Mrs. Dale did not say much about the children that night.

They were all up early the next morning. Both children were in the large hen yard, feeding the hens and chickens before breakfast. It seemed as if they had always lived there.

They came in to breakfast rosy and happy, and Henry said: "O Mrs. Dale! when we were feeding the chickens, a dear little bird came close to us. We were so afraid he would fly away that we held our breath, didn't we, Janet?"

"Yes, indeed we did," said Janet.

"Perhaps if we go there every morning, he will get tame enough to eat out of our hands. Do you think he would, Mrs. Dale?"

"Perhaps so," she answered with a smile.

That day Henry watered the horse and fed the pigs. He drove the cows to pasture without making them run. Janet wiped the dishes and made the beds. She fed

Goldie and scattered crumbs in the yard for the birds. Both children were busy and happy all day.

After the children had gone to bed, Mr. and Mrs. Dale sat on their cool porch. They could hear the frogs in the meadow and the crickets in the field.

"Which one do you want to keep?" Mr. Dale asked at last. "Janet would be a great help to you as she grows older."

"Yes," said Mrs. Dale, "but the boy would be a help to you. We need one on the farm."

"I wish that we could keep both with us," Mr. Dale said.

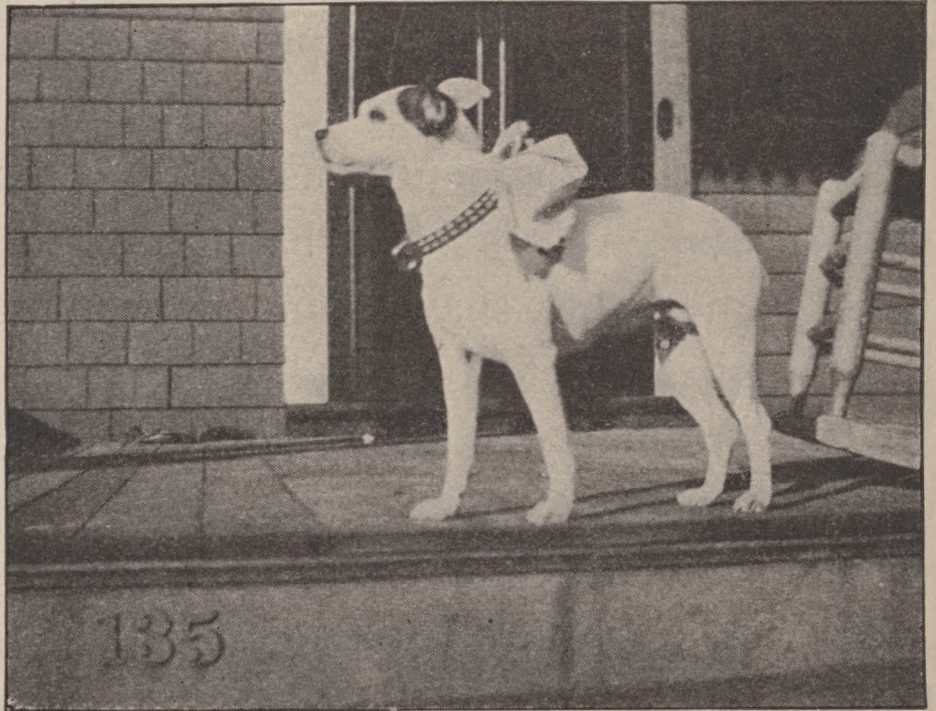
"I hope they will not have

to be separated. They are brother and sister."

Mrs. Dale laughed. "Skippy, I will leave it to you," she said. "What do you say about it?"

Skippy barked twice so loudly that two little figures in white crept downstairs, and asked what was the matter.

"Nothing," said Mr. Dale. "Kiss your new mother and run back to bed again."



SKIPPY

A CHRISTMAS PARTY

IT was the afternoon before Christmas, and although it was not late, the street lamps and stores were lighted. Snow was beginning to fall—a heavy, drifting snow that drove even the eager shoppers home as fast as they could hurry.

Down in a tenement-house district, on a corner of a street, Miss Abby's little bakeshop was filled. There were women with shawls pinned over their heads, holding out tin cans to be filled with milk for their babies. There were men with dinner pails, stopping to buy a loaf of bread or a mince pie for supper, or to get a bottle filled with hot coffee.

Miss Abby took great pains to have good coffee. She believed that if the men would come there to drink it or to fill their bottles with it, it would keep them from the drinks that took their senses away.

There were children with pennies tightly held in blue, cold hands, waiting their turn to buy the little frosted cakes or the gingerbread animals that Miss Abby sold.

The little shop was a cheerful place, full of tempting rolls and cakes and pies. It was no wonder that the children spent their pennies at Miss Abby's bakeshop. She

was always kind and patient with them, and often gave the poorest children rolls or loaves of bread that they could not pay for, or a cup of hot cocoa or milk. She had some loving little friends among the children. As she went to the window to get a Christmas plum pudding for a customer, she saw one of her young friends standing outside in the snow, looking in at the window. She smiled at the boy and motioned for him to come in. The boy came in and went to a seat behind the stove, where he waited until the last customer went away. Then he went up to the counter and, holding out a handful of pennies, said, "I'll have to get my supper here to-night."

Miss Abby buttered a roll, cut a thin slice of cheese, and poured out a mug of hot cocoa.

"Have you sold all your papers?" she asked.

"Yes, I had good luck to-day, and I was going to try to have a family party for Nellie and Kate, but it is no use," he said. "Father is drinking again."

"Where are Nellie and Kate?" Miss Abby asked anxiously.

"Oh, they are at home. Father won't hurt them, but Nellie told me to get my supper here to-night. There is no use trying to have any Christmas party, you see."

A tear rolled down the boy's cheek. Miss Abby saw it and sighed. All she could do was to give him a good supper and make him take it as a Christmas gift.

After supper Horace went out for about half an hour. When he came back his eyes were bright and shining, and he looked as if something good had happened to him. Before Miss Abby could ask him any questions, he spoke.



FAIRY

"I want some bread, Miss Abby, and milk, hot milk if you have it; and could you give me a box and some rags to make a bed of for some little puppies?"

"Why, my dear boy, what do you mean? You have n't any little puppies out in this snow, I hope," she said.

"No, but I must hurry, for she is starving, I am afraid, and they will freeze on the cold floor."

"Horace! what are you talking about? I don't know what you mean," said Miss Abby.

"I was just a little way from here," said Horace, "when I heard a whining noise, oh, so sad, and something

brushed against me. I stooped down, and there was a little dog. She stood up on her hind legs, put her little paws on me, then ran on, and came back, until I knew she wanted me to follow. So I went after her, and she kept looking back. Just around the corner is an empty house — ”

“ Yes, I know,” said Miss Abby.

“ Well, she tried to push open the back gate, but the snow was against it, and she was n’t strong enough. I opened it for her, and in she ran. The back door was broken open and she went in. I followed and heard little puppies crying. She ran to them and then back to me. I knew she was asking me for food, so I came back here as fast as I could to get something for them. I want to make a bed for them. Will you help me? ”

“ Indeed I will,” said Miss Abby, heartily. “ It is good work for Christmas Eve to help any suffering creature.”

In a few minutes Miss Abby had a little basket ready, and a can of milk, and an empty box with an old piece of blanket in it.

“ Come back and tell me about the little family when they are fed,” she said, as Horace went out of the shop.

It took him but a few minutes to reach the old house around the corner. When he entered it, the dog ran to meet him and jumped up on him, whimpering. She was trying to tell him, in the only way she knew, how cold and hungry and lonesome she felt.

Horace lighted a candle that he had brought, and opened the basket and got a bowl, which he filled with warm milk. He broke up pieces of bread to put into it. He set it down before the eager little dog, who could hardly wait to get her nose into the bowl, and who ate as if she were starving.

While she was eating, Horace put the box in the corner of the room, and put the puppies into it upon the warm blanket. He filled the bowl a second time for the mother, and she ate all he gave her and cleaned out the dish with her tongue. Then she ran to the box, and wagging her tail and looking gratefully at Horace, she jumped in and lay down beside her cold babies.

Horace looked around the room. To his surprise it was not empty. An old stove, a broken table, and two wooden chairs were there. A few wooden boxes were piled up in one corner, and Horace thought it would be nice to make a fire in the old stove.

"If I could borrow a blanket of Miss Abby, I could spend the night here," he thought. Already he loved the dog and her puppies, and he wanted to stay and protect them. "I will go and ask Miss Abby," he said to himself, and he hurried to the bakeshop.

Miss Abby, after thinking it over, said: "I think the owner would be glad to let you stay there to-night, and I will speak to the policeman on the beat. I will lend

you blankets and a pillow, but you must sweep up the floor first. Here is a broom and a safety lamp that will burn all the evening."

"How good you are to me, dear Miss Abby," said Horace. "If I could have my sisters with me this evening, how happy I should be!"

"Perhaps you can have them to-morrow if you stay there. You can buy a basket of coal and a bundle of wood and make a fire for yourself."

Horace swept the room clean, brushed the stove, made a fire, filled an old teakettle with water, and looked after his little family in the box. Miss Abby ran over to visit him and found him sitting on the floor watching the little dog, who was fast asleep with her puppies in their snug bed.

"This is a jolly Christmas Eve, thanks to Santa Claus. I have named the dog Santa, and she answers to the name already. She is remarkably bright," said Horace, proudly.

"You ought to be happy, Horace," said Miss Abby, "for you have saved the dog and her puppies from dying."

"Yes, I am happy, but I shall be happier to-morrow if I can get my sisters here and have a Christmas party. We won't have to buy Santa a collar, because she has one on," said Horace. "Why, it has a name on it! It was so dark that I did n't see it before."

Miss Abby held the lamp and Horace read the name and address. Miss Abby said: "Read it again. Is it really Miss Waite, 17 Blossom Road?"

"It really is," said Horace.

Then Miss Abby took the little dog in her arms and looked at her earnestly. "It is Fairy—Miss Waite's Fairy. How thankful she will be. I don't understand how Fairy could have been lost. We must send word to Miss Waite to-night, Horace. She had to go away for two or three weeks where she could not take Fairy, and I know that she felt uneasy about leaving her. She was to come home to-day and will be very anxious when she finds that Fairy is gone."

"I will go and tell her, then," said Horace, sadly. "I suppose I could n't have kept her, so I am glad that she has such a fine home."

Miss Waite had just got home and was sitting with her hat on, trying to think what she could do to recover her lost dog. She was very unhappy and could not rest after she was told that Fairy could not be found.

"Telephone to all the papers," she said to her maid. "Do anything that will bring her back. I am afraid I shall never see her again. She would die if left out in the cold or illtreated in any way."

"There is the doorbell," said the maid, and she hurried out of the room. She came back very quickly.

"Here is a boy to see you," she said, "and he is sure he has found Fairy."

When Miss Waite could speak, she said to the boy: "How do you know it is my little Fairy? Are you sure? Where is she? I will go with you at once and see if it is my dog."

"I am sure it is, Miss Waite, for Miss Abby and I read the name on the collar. Besides, Miss Abby has often seen her with you."

"Do you mean Miss Abby Graham who keeps a bakeshop? Did she send you? Then I am sure it is all right."

On the way, in the carriage, Miss Waite asked Horace to tell her everything he could about finding Fairy and her puppies. When she entered the room that Horace had tried to make cheerful, there was a joyful meeting between Fairy and her mistress. Then Fairy showed her puppies with great pride.

Miss Abby was there, and she told Miss Waite the whole story about Horace and how he had tried to make Fairy and her puppies comfortable.

Miss Waite turned to Horace and said: "You must finish your Christmas Eve with Fairy and me. You must spend the night at my home. You can carry the puppies to the carriage, and I will take Fairy. To-morrow I will send for your sisters and try to give you all the best and happiest Christmas that you ever had. You must come,

too, Miss Abby, and help us celebrate the day. This boy must be kind to all of God's creatures, or he would not have stopped in the snowstorm to rescue my poor little Fairy."

The delightful Christmas Day was soon over, but Horace and his sisters had good reason to remember it, for their lives became much brighter and happier through Miss Waite's friendship.

THE ADVENTURES OF KITTY GRAY

WHEN Mrs. Tyler and her family went to the beach for the summer, the first thing that Betty Tyler begged for was a kitten to play with.

Mrs. Tyler was not fond of kittens, but she was fond of her little Betty; so when a playmate brought Betty a present of a white kitten with a gray back and one gray ear, it was allowed to stay.

Betty was not a very strong little girl. She could not romp all day as most of her friends were able to do, so the kitten was a great deal of company. Often she laughed at Kitty Gray's frolics, when she might have been very lonely without her.

The summer passed away rapidly. As the cool days came, Mrs. Tyler said that they must get ready to go back to their city home. Betty gathered all her books and playthings, and Hannah, the maid, packed them in a little trunk.

"What can we carry Kitty Gray in?" Betty asked her mother. "She has grown so large that we shall need a big basket for her."

Her mother answered, "Don't bother me now about Kitty; I am busy."

The day came for the journey home. They had to hire a wagon to go to the train, and after an hour's ride in the cars, they would reach the city where their cozy home was.

The train was an early one, and the family all hurried to get ready. Mr. Tyler kept calling that the wagon was waiting and that they would lose the train.

"O mother!" cried Betty, "you or Hannah must find me a basket for my kitten. I can't leave her behind."

"You mustn't bother me now," said Mrs. Tyler. "I have n't time to look for a basket."

Betty then called to Robert, but he had started with his dog Hero. The dog was pulling hard at his leash, and Robert had to run to keep up with him.

"Come, come," called Mr. Tyler, "you will lose the train."

"Hurry up, Betty," said Mrs. Tyler. "We can't stop for your kitty now. She will be all right for a few days. She can get under the house and can find enough to eat."

"But, mamma, I want Kitty Gray so much. It seems cruel to leave her here alone. See, she is crying after me now," said Betty, almost crying herself.

"You must come, Betty. I will send Robert down after her in a few days."

So the family drove away and left poor Kitty Gray behind. She ran a little way after the wagon, crying piteously; then she went back to the empty house. She tried

to jump up on the kitchen window, but the shutters were closed and there was no resting place for her little feet.

She went to the back door and cried, and when no one let her in, she went to the front door and cried. So she went around the house all day, crying and begging to get in, but there was no one to hear her.

At night a cold rain came on and the lonesome, hungry kitten crawled under the house, trembling with



KITTY GRAY

cold and fright. Now and then she crept to one of the doors, hoping that some one would open it.

Mrs. Tyler slept comfortably all night and never thought of Kitty Gray, but kind-hearted little Betty heard the rain, and cried as she thought of her little companion looking for food and shelter.

Days went by and Mrs. Tyler did not send for Kitty Gray. Betty asked her about it often, and she promised to send as soon as Robert had a holiday.

When Betty saw Hero stretch himself before the open fire after a good supper, she wondered where Kitty Gray got her supper. At night when the wind blew, she could not get to sleep for a long time. She could not forget her kitten crying about an empty house.

One night when her father came in, she heard him say, "It has begun to snow."

"What is the matter with Betty?" Mr. Tyler asked his wife, as Betty left the room. "She has not seemed like herself since we came home. She looks too pale and sober for a little girl. Have n't you noticed it?"

"I have been so busy that I haven't thought about it," answered Mrs. Tyler.

"She cries sometimes nights," said Robert. "Stormy nights I have heard her cry, and last night I heard her say, 'Oh, my poor, poor kitty!'"

"Have n't you sent for that cat yet?" asked Mr. Tyler. "I thought you would attend to it, or I would have sent for her myself. The poor thing is probably dead by this time, and Betty is grieving herself sick."

"I meant to send," said Mrs. Tyler, "but there has n't been any good chance."

"I will go to-morrow myself," said Mr. Tyler. "If she is alive now, she can't live long in this snow."

"I will go with you," said Mrs. Tyler. "I want a few things that I left there. You will find Kitty Gray all right. Cats that are left at the beach go to that boarding house near the station. That is kept open all winter."

"How many cats do you suppose the man who lives there wants to take care of?" Mr. Tyler remarked. Before his wife could answer, Betty came into the room.

"Coasting to-morrow!" said her brother.

Betty did not look at him. "I think I will go to bed," she said, and she looked very unhappy.

"Betty," said her father, "your mother and I are going to the cottage to-morrow, and we hope to bring back Kitty Gray."

Betty's face brightened. "O papa, I am so glad, so very glad! Now I won't worry any more, for to-morrow night I shall have her with me. Dear Kitty Gray, I have missed her all this time, and I have been so worried.

It was about noon when Mr. and Mrs. Tyler left the train and went to the boarding house near the station. Mrs. Tyler said to the man in charge, "We came for our cat. I meant to come or send before, but I have been very busy. Has she been here with you?"

"No, she has n't been here," answered Mr. Graves, rather crossly. "A lot of families who keep cats or kittens here all summer go off and leave them to starve and freeze when winter comes. I can't take care of them all."

"Do you remember seeing a small gray and white cat around anywhere?" Mrs. Tyler asked.

"I saw one early this morning in the snow. It was starved or frozen—both, I guess, for it was dead," he answered.

Tears came into Mrs. Tyler's eyes. "Oh, I hope it was n't ours. Please harness your horse and drive us to

our cottage as fast as you can."

As they drove along the beach road, they passed several closed cottages; in front of one of these a brave little



A DESERTED CAT

black cat was pushing her way through the snow, trying to reach the door of her desolate home.

"I have been trying to catch that cat ever since the family left, but she is so frightened that I can't get near her. She is pretty weak though now. I will try again," said Mr. Graves.

Mr. and Mrs. Tyler soon reached their own cottage

and got out. No tracks of feet were to be seen in the snow. "O dear! I am afraid that she is dead," said Mrs. Tyler. "How can we tell Betty!"

They went to the front door and unlocked it. As they opened it, Mr. Tyler said, "Hark! I thought I heard a kitten mewling."

They both listened and heard a weak, pitiful cry. They stooped down to look under the porch and called, "Kitty, kitty."

A very thin cat came slowly crawling out and looked up into their faces. She opened her mouth to cry, but she was so weak that she made no sound.

"This poor, wretched cat must be Kitty Gray," said Mrs. Tyler, "and she



POOR KITTY GRAY

is nearly starved. Oh, can't we do something for her quick? If she dies, I shall never forget her pitiful face."

Mr. Graves looked under the porch and said, "There are some little kittens under here."

He put his arm under the porch and took out five kittens. Two were dead, and the others were just alive. The poor mother had tried to make a soft bed for them on some newspapers and to keep them warm with her thin little body.

Mrs. Tyler took up the little mother and held her under her coat. "Let us go right back to your house, Mr. Graves, and get some warm milk. Mr. Tyler will carry the kittens, and we will hurry," she said.

When they reached the house, they heated a little milk and fed Kitty Gray with a teaspoon until she could lap a little. Then they fed the three little ones. They stayed until afternoon, and fed Kitty Gray a little at a time until she could stand.

It was six o'clock and dark when Betty heard her father and mother. She had been watching for them all the afternoon. When the door opened, Betty flew to the basket that her father was carrying very carefully.

"Wait, Betty — wait, dear. Be careful. Kitty Gray has some baby kittens for you, but you must not touch them to-night."

He lifted the warm covering. Kitty Gray looked up and mewed faintly. She knew her little mistress and began to purr. Betty's tears fell on the little heads in the basket, and she could not speak. They made Kitty Gray a bed in the kitchen, and all the evening Betty watched over the little family. The little mother was so happy that she hardly stopped singing until they left her.

In the morning Kitty Gray was much stronger and the kittens were more lively, but it was a long time before

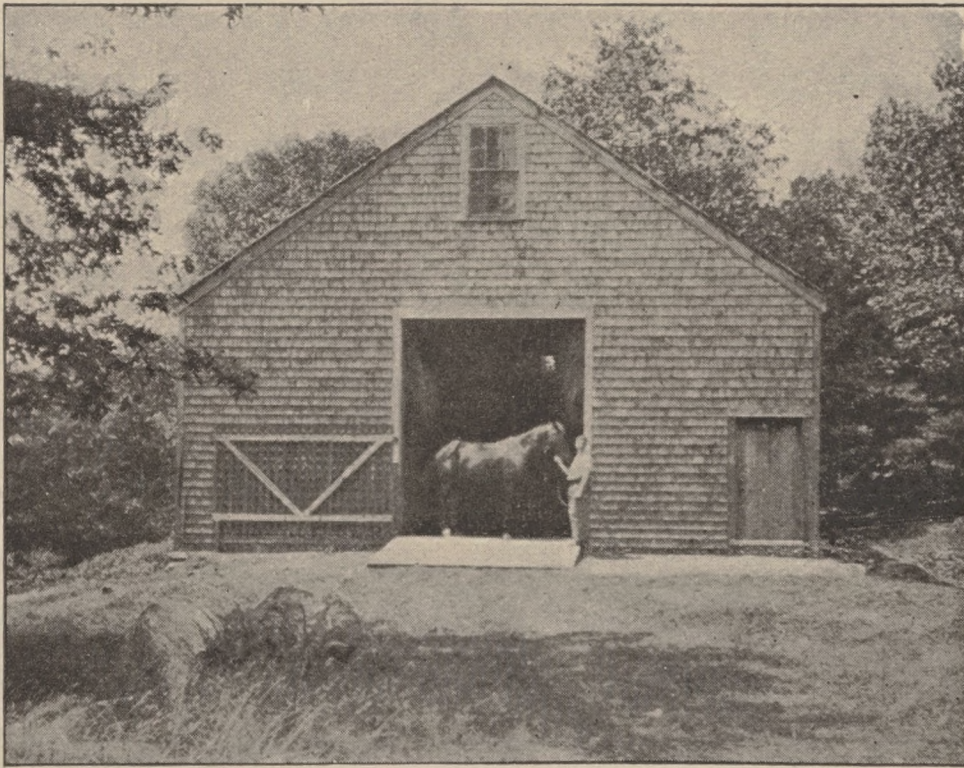
Kitty Gray was sleek and plump again, though she had the best of care.

"I have learned a lesson that I shall never forget," said Mrs. Tyler. "I did not realize how cruel it is to desert cats. Robert and I are going to the beach next Saturday to see if we can get that poor cat we saw there or find any others. If I tell everybody how our Kitty Gray suffered from hunger and cold, it may keep others from leaving cats behind them when they move from one place to another."

A CHRISTMAS STABLE

IT is said that at midnight on Christmas Eve the gift of speech is given to all animals in stables, in memory of the Christ-child who was born in a stable.

One Christmas Eve, at the midnight hour, a number of animals were taking their rest in a large barn near the



ENTERING THE HOME OF REST

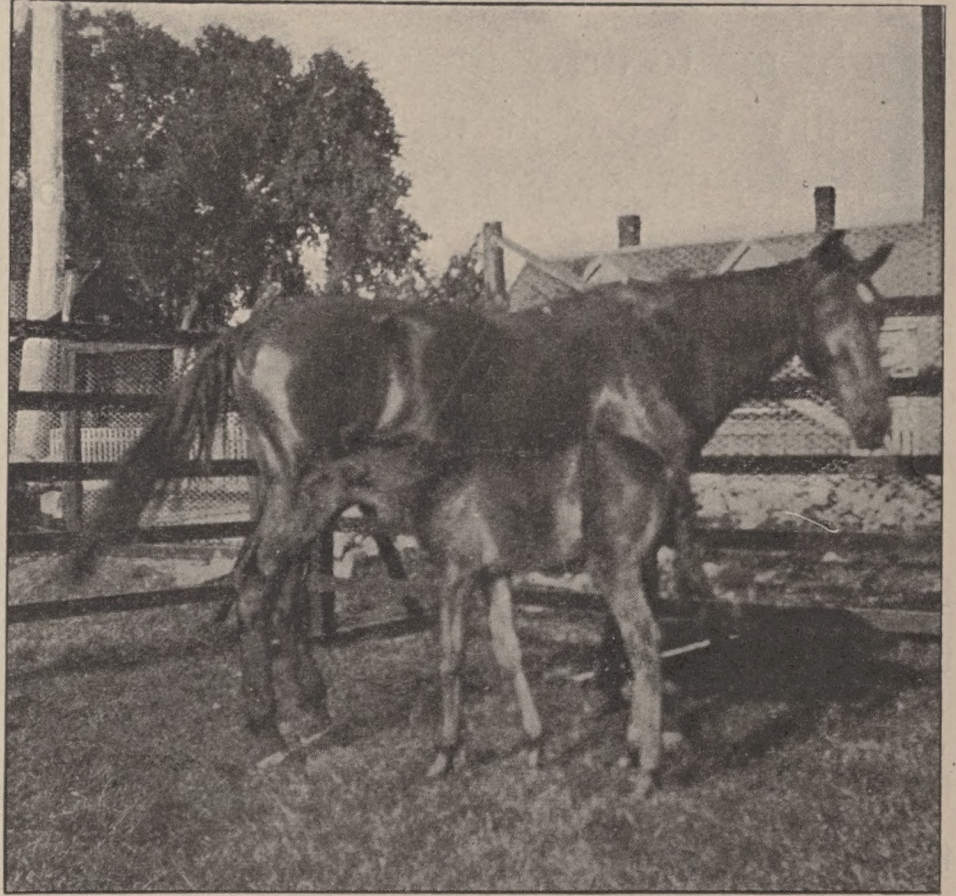
old town of Dedham. As the bells in the village a mile away chimed out the hour of twelve, a big black horse, called Black Beauty, got up from her comfortable bed of straw

and called to a young filly in the next stall. It was plain to see that they were mother and daughter, for they looked so much alike.

"Wake up, Fanny. We can talk to each other now and you ought to know your mother's history."

Fanny gave a sleepy whinny and got up, looking over the gate of her box stall at her mother, who said: "I was born in the country on a large farm, and for two happy years I

pranced and rolled about in a pasture. It was hard to leave this happy home, to be sold to a cruel horse trainer. He forced a sharp bit into my tender mouth and whipped me because I hated it. He



BLACK BEAUTY AND LITTLE FANNY

tied heavy weights to me and made me drag them. He was always beating me, until I dreaded the sight of him.

"After I was trained to go in harness, I was sold again, and this time to a kind master. I lived with him five happy years, and then he had to sell me. I was put to work in an express wagon, but it was too hard for me, and I got

lame. My foot hurt me so much that I could hardly walk, so my cruel master tried whipping me to cure me of what he called laziness.

"I grew worse, and I was put into an auction room, where my mouth was pulled open to show my teeth, and where I was made to trot as fast as I could go. A man bought me to drive in another express wagon. When I was all tired out at night, he put me into a stall too narrow to lie down in. I had neither bed nor blanket, and I had to stand all night. Often I had no water, and my oats were husks, and the hay musty. I grew thin and cross and was tired all the time. I limped worse than ever, so that I was sent to be sold in auction again.

"This time a kind man bought me out of pity, for he saw that I was not able to work. Then I had the good fortune to be sent here for a vacation, and here you were born.

"After twelve happy weeks my master who sent me here to this Home of Rest came one day and took me back to the city to work. The streets were so hard and slippery that my lameness returned, and one day I fell. I heard my master say that he must sell me, and I trembled with fear of what might come to me, but the kind people where I had my vacation bought me. Now my foot is well. I am useful here and expect to end my days in this good Home of Rest."

A loud whinny was heard, and Old Huckleberry said:
"I am the oldest horse here. I have a story to tell, too,

but it is not very exciting. I worked twenty years for one mistress. My greatest trouble was when she hired boys to drive me, for they hurried me along the road, whip in hand, no matter how tired or stiff I felt. She often groomed me herself, and fed me and gave me fresh water."

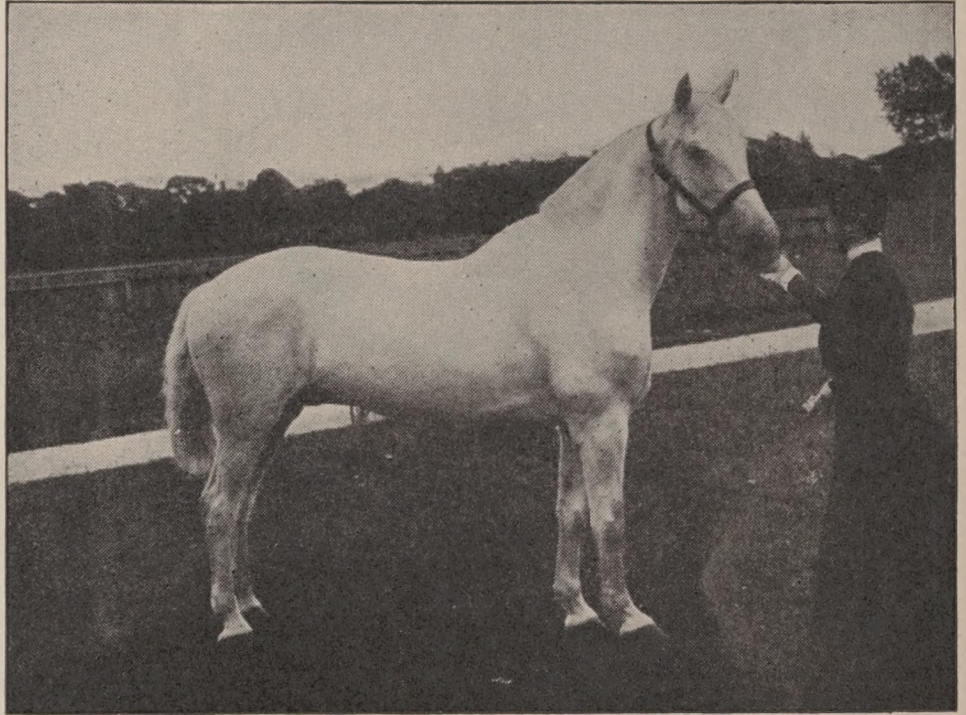
"If you had such a good home, what are you doing here?" asked Fanny the filly.

"I came here because my mistress felt that I was too old

to work, and she loved me so much that she would not sell me. I felt homesick here at first, and I could n't eat, but I am contented and happy now."

"I should say so," said Robin, a handsome horse in an opposite stall. "I never saw an old horse kick up the way you do, nor scamper across a field more lively to get the apples first that fall from that tree over the fence."

"Oh, I am all right," said Old Huckleberry, "and I expect to be lively a long time. I suppose you have a



ROBIN

story to tell, Robin. I believe you have traveled in great style. How came you here? ”

“ I don’t like to talk about it,” said Robin. “ I was injured by a groom who took me out at night when my owner thought I was safe in my stall. He rode me and

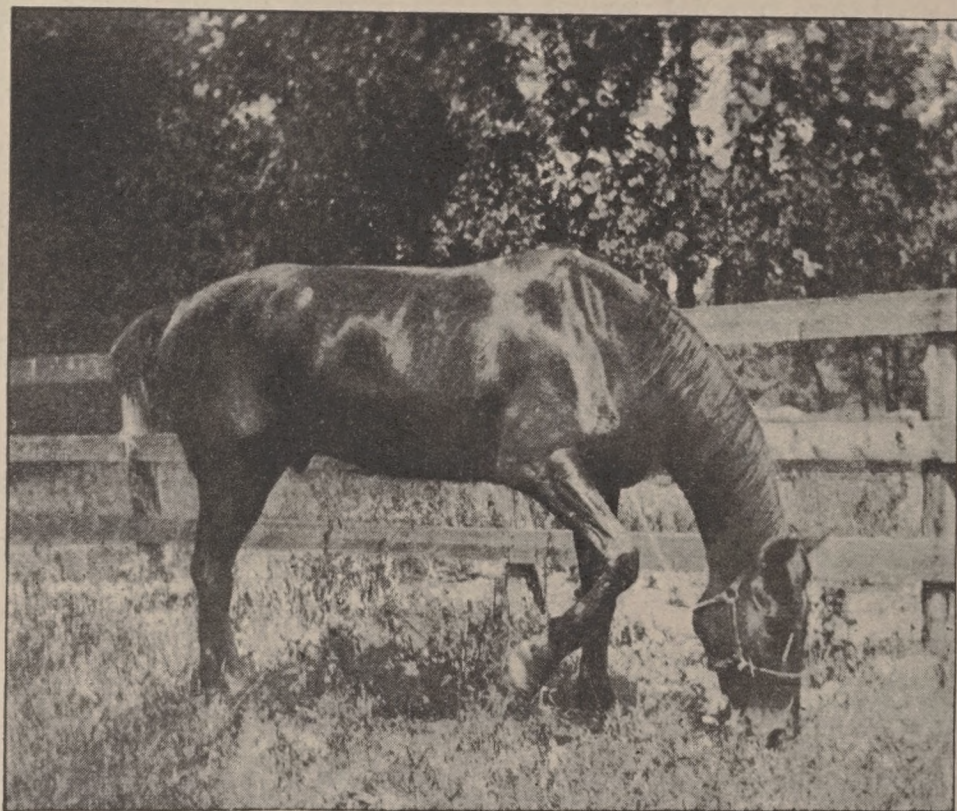


BILLY

drove me so hard that one night I fell, and I shall never get over the injury I received. My owner was so sorry for me that she sent me to this Home of Rest. I like to run and roll in the paddock, but I am not able to work. That is my story.”

“ My name used to be Billy,” said a thin white horse, who was lying down in his stall, “ but it is years since any one called me by my name. I am old now and stiff

and sore. One morning last week I could not get up; my stall was so narrow that I was cramped for room when I lay down, and I had to lie on the hard floor. My master kicked me to make me get up, and I tried to get up on my feet, because his heavy boot hurt me, but he had to get another man to help pull me up. He fed me better for a few days and even rubbed my legs, and that meant that he was going to sell me. I was



PRINCE

glad, for I knew that I could not get a worse master.

"He was leading me through the street when a man stopped him, and after some talking, he gave my master some money and brought me here.

"How I enjoy the rest and food, the soft bedding and kind words! Are you sure they won't send me away?"

"Sure," said all the horses, and poor Billy put his head down and stretched himself out on his side to rest.

"They call me Prince," said a chestnut horse. "I am going back to work when I am rested. I am driven in a cab, and I am willing to work, for I have a kind master, who is just as good to me as he can be. I fell and hurt my knee on the slippery streets, and my master said that it was a good time to give me a vacation, so I came here, and I am having a fine rest."

"My master is kind, too," said another horse, "and I am not in need of rest, for my work is light. One morn-



GOOD OLD BOBS

ing I waited and waited for my master, and I whinnied for my breakfast, but he did n't come. It was almost night before any one fed me or gave me a drink, and I was very hungry and thirsty. The next morn-

ing I was brought here, and I heard them say that my master was ill and had been carried to the hospital, so there was no one to take care of me. I've been here two weeks, rolling and running like a colt, but I hope to see my master again soon, for he was always good to me. He called me his best friend, and I know that he loved me."

"It seems to me," said a voice in the hayloft, "that you horses forget that there are dogs in the world. What would you all do if you did not have me to protect you?"

No one dares to come near this stable at night because I am the 'good old Bobs' that guards the whole place through the day."

"I help," said Fido the spaniel.

"I keep out the rats," said Pat the terrier.

"We are all dogs who have come here to be useful," said Fluffy.

"I should like to know of what use you and Fido are," said old Bobs, "racing around like mad, and scaring the birds."

"Yes, they do indeed," piped a little voice high up

in the rafters, where sparrows and pigeons were snugly tucked away.

"The cats would trouble you more than we do," said Fido, "only they are too fat and lazy to run around as we dogs do. The mistress loves us and gives us lumps of sugar sometimes."



"I HELP," SAID FIDO

"She gives me two lumps because I stand up for it," said Fluffy.

"Is that what you call being useful?" said old Bobs, as he regarded Fluffy with an expression of scorn.

"We are all going to have lots of sugar to-morrow, because it's Christmas," the filly remarked cheerfully.

"And apples, and carrots," said Robin.

"And crumbs, and seeds, and corn," said the pigeons.

"And nuts," added the little



"CHRISTMAS MEANS PEACE"

squirrel, who had a warm place under the floor.

"Oh, are you there?" said Fido. "I'll give you a fine chase to-morrow for fun."

"Not if the missie sees you," answered the squirrel.

"Hush!" said Black Beauty, "Christmas means peace. That means that no one must be angry, or quarrel, or hurt any one else. It means kindness and love."

Just then the clocks struck one, the hour of speech was over, and all the animals in the stable at the Home of Rest settled down to sleep again.

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